

Adventures Luna Never Had

by alienyouthct

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Summary: A series of miscellaneous one-shots encompassing all sorts of crossover-related adventures that Luna never had. And possibly one or two non-crossover adventures. The jury's still out on that. Category 2 will drift relative to whatever the latest chapter includes.

1. Agent Elle (Men in Black)

Title: _Agent Elle

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumperâ€| err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine.

>Summary: Black suits? Check. Black Ray-Bans? Check. Neuralyzer? â€|well, they've got something close enoughâ€|

>Joe's Note: Lexi and I have the strangest conversations about possible ideas for _Harry Potter_ short fics. This was one that I came up with while waiting for my car to finish sucking the gas pump dry this afternoon.

>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing.

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><p>Letting out a ragged sigh, Hermione Granger watched as the last of the Death Eaters apparated away and then rose from where she was crouched behind her parents' Saab. Voldemort was dead. Officially, the war was over. This sort of thing wasn't supposed to happen

anymore. And yetâ€¦ it did. Looking around at the burning storefronts and pockmarked pavement still smoldering beneath guttering, unnaturally-colored flames, Hermione found herself intensely grateful that she'd made plans with her parents for the afternoon. Even with Harry now among their ranks, auror response time was still abysmal and she didn't even want to think about how much damage the five dark wizards would have caused if allowed to rampage unchecked. A soft pop off to her left had Hermione whirling as she brought her wand up to point atâ€¦ "Luna?"<p>

"Hullo." Well, the voice was right even if the person standing in front of her looked nothing like the Luna Lovegood that Hermione was used to. Instead of the clashing, mismatched assortment of muggle and wizarding clothes she generally preferred, Luna was wearing a crisp black suit and tie, a slick pair of black sunglasses hiding her eyes from view. Her normally wild hair had been braided and wound into a bun at the base of her skull, and her trademark homemade jewelry was nowhere to be found. The overall effect was a Luna that was so un-Luna it wasâ€¦ disconcerting. "Aren't you supposed to be enjoying an afternoon out with your parents?"

Oh. Right. Her parents. Hermione turned to look over at her parents and winced. Why did they never get to see the good side of the wizarding world? No, it was brawls in bookstores and spell fire in the middle of a London street. It was no wonder that they shied away from visiting Diagon Alley with her when she dropped by to stock up on supplies. "We were. And thenâ€¦ this." Luna let out a non-committal hum before drawing her wand, pressing the tip to her temple before flicking her wrist and sending a silver rabbit bounding away. A long and silent minute later, a half-dozen more figures in black suits appeared and began spreading out on the street. Hermione quickly recognized the familiar pattern of obliviation and false memory implantation, and shot a surprised look at the blonde. She'd initially written off Luna's unexpected and radical change in attire as the blonde deciding to embark on a whole new phase of strangeness, but if all of the obliviators were dressed like thatâ€¦ "Luna? What's going on?"

Raising a finger to her lips, Luna leaned in. "Shh! While we're on the clock, we're no longer part of the system. We're above the system. Over it. Beyond it. When I'm in the field, call meâ€¦ Agent Elle."

Hermione stared at Luna incredulously for a few seconds and then buried her face in her hands. "I never should have taken you to see that movie. The first, second, third, or fourth time. Although I suppose you're not the only one to blame; you couldn't have turned the Obliviator Corps into the Men in Black without the rest of them agreeing to it." Behind her, her mother cleared her throat and Hermione looked back to find her mother standing there with one eyebrow raised. What? Her mother gestured to Luna and Hermione realized that while her parents had met Ron once and Harry a handful of times, they'd never met the friends she'd made in her later years at Hogwarts. Luna among them. "Oh! I'm sorry. Mum, Dad, this isâ€¦ err, Agent Elle. She's an obliviator for the Ministry of Magic. She helps keep magic a secret afterâ€¦ well, things like this. Agent Elle, meet Ian and Jean Granger. My parents."

"Oh!" Perking up, Luna reached out and grabbed Jean's hand, shaking it enthusiastically before repeating the process with Ian. "I'm ever

so glad to meet you. Hermione's told me so many things about you. Probably hasn't told you much about me yet, but that's okay. We'll have plenty of time to get to know each other over dinner tonight."

Ian and Jean looked at each other in confusion, no doubt wondering how this stranger knew about their dinner plans today and why she thought she'd be a part of themâ€| but Hermione knew her apple hadn't fallen far from the tree. Suddenly the pieces clicked together in her mother's head and Jean looked over at Hermione with an unreadable expression. "â€|I thought you were dating that Ronald boy with the slightly slow father. Is there something you need to tell us, Hermione?"

Chuckling nervously, Hermione wrung her hands as she looked back and forth between her parents. "I just want to highlight the fact that I never technically lied to you. Like when we made plans for tonight, I told you that I wanted you to get to know 'my significant other' better. Or I've said things like 'my companion' or 'the person I'm dating'. You just assumed it was still Ron and Iâ€| never bothered to correct you." Her parents continued to stare at her until Hermione flinched and looked away, offering Luna the best puppy dog eyes she could manage. "I don't suppose you can wipe this memory from their head so we can try this again?"

"No, but we will be having a nice long talk about your not-lying when I get out of work. Speaking of work, though, I really ought to be doing it right now." Leaning in, Luna pressed her lips to the corner of Hermione's mouth. "See you in a few hours, luv." Pulling away, she darted in to surprise each of Hermione's parents with a hug before waving energetically and then disappearing with a pop. She appeared a few yards away down the street, quickly drawing her wand and going to work obliterating a couple who had witnessed Hermione's battle with the quintet of Death Eaters.

More hideously awkward silence followed Luna's departure and Hermione was seconds away from making some sort of excuse that would let her apparate away to regroup when her father blurted out a question she wouldn't have seen coming in a million years. "I just need to know one thing, sweetie. This girlfriend of yours. Luna. Elle. Whoever. She's not a Winchester Castle fan, is she?"

"Yes, Ian, because what football team our daughter's secret girlfriend supports is the most important thing right now."

"It is to me!"

2. Come With Me (Terminator)

Title: _Come With Meâ€|

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

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Not entirely sure how the entire _Terminator_ franchise fits together, what with the movies and TV show and comics and all, or who owns any of it. Not me, though. Not mine, don't sue, et cetera and so

forth.

>Summary: Harry asks for help. He gets some. From the year 2027.

>Joe's Note: No beta, no sanity, no problem. If this sucks, blame the Mt. Dew and the 4AM writing. And the fact that I wrote it back in January 2012, and I'd like to think that my skills have improved considerably since then.

>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing.

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><p>From one shadowy corner of the Chamber of Secrets, she waited. She watched. She listened. Unlike organics, she found it quite easy to be endlessly patient. When one could live forever as long as they received new fuel cells on schedule, one second was one hour was one day was one year, all blinks of an eye to a being who was effectively immortal. And so rather than act rashly, as her creators might have, she waited for the perfect moment to strike.<p>

She watched as Tom Marvolo Riddle paced impatiently at the base of Slytherin's statue, muttering under his breath as he awaited his desired prey. And she watched as Harry Potter begged him for help. She watched as Riddle dangled hints of his true identity before eventually revealing it to his clueless foe, tracing his name in fiery letters in midair. And still she waited for the proper circumstances to be met. For if there was no dangerâ€| no lethal dangerâ€| there would be no life debt and her efforts would be for naught.

She waitedâ€| and then she struck.

* * *

><p>"So. Your mother died to save you. Yes, that's a powerful countercharm. I can see nowâ€| there's nothing special about you after all. I wondered, you see. There are strange likenesses between us, after all. Even you must have noticed, Harry. Both half-bloods, orphans, raised by muggles. Probably the only two parselmouths to come to Hogwarts since the great Slytherin himself. We even look something alikeâ€| but after all, it was merely a lucky chance that saved you from me. That's all I wanted to know." Harry watched Riddle warily, waiting for the apparition to raise his stolen wand. But the older boy's just smiled wider before looking away. "Now, Harry, I'm going to teach you a little lesson. Let's match the powers of Lord Voldemort - heir of Salazar Slytherin - against famous Harry Potter and the best weapons Dumbledore can give himâ€|" Looking down at Fawkes and the Sorting Hat, Harry gulped nervously, having a good idea what Riddle was going to try and match against his motley supporters. He watched as Riddle walked away, stopping between the high pillars and looking up into the stone face of Slytherin's statue, high above him in the gloomy chamber. He spoke in parseltongue rather than English, but Harry still understood every last syllable. "Speak to me, Slytherin, greatest of the Hogwarts fourâ€|"<p>

As Harry watched, unable to turn away as nightmare became real life,

Slytherin's gigantic stone face began to move. Much like Harry, the statue's mouth opened wider and wider, the jaw dropping to create a gaping black hole. And then something was stirring inside the statue's mouth, slithering up from inside it. Instinctively, Harry closed his eyes and backed slowly into the chamber wall. Fawkes' wing swept against his cheek as the phoenix took flight, and Harry found himself alone save from the silent and motionless Sorting Hat he was still clutching in one hand. Now what?

The floor vibrated as something huge hit the cold stone and Harry shuddered. The basilisk was loose. He could almost picture it slithering out of the statue's mouth, uncoiling and stretching after its temporary slumber. Then he heard Riddle's voice call out again and Harry's blood ran cold. "Kill him."

Harry turned and began to stumble blindly along the side of the chamber, one hand grasping the hat as the other alternated between touching the wall at his side and sweeping out in front of him to check for obstacles. He stumbled over something that crunched and clattered at the impact; the skeleton of a rat or some other small animal, maybe? Behind him, the basilisk's scales made an odd scratching sound as they slid along the stone floor and Riddle laughed at his panicked flight. Something caught Harry's foot as he pressed on, tripping him up and bringing him to his knees. It was only feet away from him now, Harry could tell by the sound, and then the stone vibrated rapidly with heavy footsteps. A loud hissing filled the air and he curled into a fetal ball, waiting for death, only to hear two deafeningly loud bangs and a screech of pain from the basilisk.

As he lay there, wondering what to do next, there were several more thumps, hisses, and screeches, and then what was most definitely a foot kicked Harry in the kidneys. Opening his eyes, he rolled onto his back and stared up at a blonde angel in a jumper and grey skirt, standing over him as the basilisk swayed back and forth drunkenly above them. Turning away from her foe, the girl offered him one hand. "Come with me if you want to live."

"Are youâ€¦ whatâ€¦ the basiliskâ€¦ how are you not dead?" Harry chanced a closer look at the massive snake as it whipped its head back and forth, not noticing its injuries until dark red blood dripped down onto him. Both of its massive yellow eyes were gone, crushed and leaving behind gaping, empty sockets. Jaw dropping, Harry took the blonde's hand and stumbled as she yanked him roughly to his feet. As he pulled away from her, Harry finally noticed the dark red blood staining her hand - and now his own - and realization dawned. "Youâ€¦"

The blonde girl twisted and shoved him towards the mouth of the Chamber of Secrets. "Evacuate the area if you value your life. My unique composition protected the majority of my systems from the basilisk's stare long enough for me to neutralize its eyes, but it is still an extremely dangerous creature."

Opening his mouth to protest, Harry closed it as he heard Riddle scream out instructions from the opposite end of the chamber. "No! They're right there! Focus; ignore the pain. You can still smell them. Kill them both: the boy first, then the girl for hurting you!"

Harry closed his mouth. That 'evacuate the area' idea was starting to sound real good in his book. He turned to the girl, whose name he still couldn't remember but who looked awfully familiar, but she was busy looking around the chamber. "The basilisk must have swept it away when it was thrashing around." Then the already strange situation took a turn for the weirder as her eyes burned blue and she swept her gaze back and forth around the chamber. Focusing on the far corner, she reached up to pull her wand out of where it had been holding her blonde hair in a bun, the hair breaking free and falling to the ground in massive clumps in the process. The girl arched a brow, the skin of her face cracking and peeling at the movement, as she stared down at the mess on the floor. "The damage to my organic sheath was greater than I thought. Bother. That will take considerable time to regenerate." Looking back up, she stabbed her wand at the corner. "_Accio_ Remington!"

Just like with her eyes, blue light pulsed beneath the skin of the blonde's wand hand as she channeled her magic, burning through her flesh and revealing gleaming silvery metal instead of white bone beneath. Then the black shape racing out of the darkness towards them distracted Harry, a sleek object the girl caught smoothly before pivoting and aiming at the basilisk. Having only seen them before once or twice when he managed to sneak a peek of the telly, it took Harry a moment to identify it: a shotgun. Since when did the wizarding world have guns?

For that matter, when did witches have glowing blue eyes and metal bones?

The shotgun roared like thunder in the enclosed chamber, making Harry wince and clamp his hands over his ears. The girl didn't seem to mind the noise one whit, calmly emptying shot after shot into the bleeding basilisk as it screeched and tried to flee. Finally, after seven bone-rattlingly loud blasts, she ran dry and the snake began to creep away towards the statue. "I'm going to get Ginny." Harry lowered his hands from his ears, pointing towards the diary. "Grab the diary. It's behind this somehow."

"I know, Harry Potter." Emptying the last spent shell from the shotgun, the blonde began stuffing new rounds into the gun as she followed the injured basilisk. "And I know how to deal with this situation permanently. Please cover your ears." Harry decided that following her instructions sounded like a good idea, particularly when she raised that damnable gun and pointed it at the back of the retreating basilisk. It roared one last time, blowing a giant chunk out of the back of the snake's head, and the basilisk collapsed to the stone floor of the chamber. "In the words of my Uncle Bobâ€¦ hasta la vista, baby."

That brought Harry up short; it was a rather anti-climactic ending to a year's worth of terror and danger. Not that he'd particularly wanted to fight that giant basilisk, but he was Harry Potter. He was starting to get used to having to bail the school out of whatever weirdness it found itself involved in. The crazy blonde robot-witch with a shotgun appearing out of nowhere and doing all the work wasâ€¦ unsettling. Eventually, he shrugged. He'd deal. "And the diary?"

Leveling the shotgun at the book, the blonde's brow arched again as she pulled the trigger, the stressed flesh giving way at the action

and dropping to the floor to reveal an inhuman countenance beneath: a silver skull with a solid, glowing blue eye. Off to his side, the forgotten apparition of Riddle let out a dreadful, piercing scream as the shell blew a fat hole in the middle of the diary. Then silence reigned, broken only by a soft clatter as the wand Riddle had stolen from Harry dropped through his disappearing fingers and hit the floor of the chamber.

Harry blinked. Huh. Well, that solved that problem. And eww.

A soft moan sent Harry lunging for his wand, grabbing it off the floor and curling his fingers around the familiar length of wood. Whirling around, he pointed it in the direction of the noise, only to blush bright red when he realized the source: Ginny was stirring. The blonde sent him a withering glare for his stupidity as she knelt by Ginny's side, the entirely exposed metal fingers of her right hand gently brushing a lock of hair back behind Ginny's ear. With a great, shuddering gasp, the redhead's eyes opened and she stared straight up at the ceiling before the brown orbs focused and moved to the blonde holding her. "Luna?"

"Hullo, Ginny." Luna's voice seemed oddly warmer than the inflectionless, almost machine-like efficiency Harry had dealt with only minutes before and Harry wondered if the two were friends, or if Luna was always like that when under stress, orâ€¦ "How are you feeling? You've been through quite an ordeal, you know. Your father must have rejected the Ministry's attempt to get him to join in the Rotfang Conspiracy and so they decided to get at him through youâ€¦"

Ginny let out a snort of laughter at that before her eyes focused on Luna and she gasped. "What happened to your face? And your hand? Why are you metal? Did T-Tom..?"

Shaking her head, Luna helped Ginny to her feet. "Just a bit of a scratch I got while saving Harry from the basilisk." Harry let out a disbelieving laugh at that; half her bloody face was missing, revealing a creepy metal skull underneath along with a glowing blue eye. On top of that was the metal hand that glowed when she used magic and the great chunks of hair missing from her headâ€¦ scratch his arse! "I'll be okay after some food and rest. And maybe some pudding. The house elves make the most delightful sticky toffee puddingâ€¦ have you tried it?"

After thinking about that for a moment, Ginny let out a vague noise of disagreement before clarifying. "No. I could go for some hot chocolate, though. And maybe an obliviation. Do you think the house elves serve those?"

"I doubt it. We could sneak down to Hogsmeade and steal some firewhiskey, though. That's almost as good."

"Hmm. Let's ask my brothers first. Why sneak out if we don't have to?"

"Good idea. You sure you're not the Ravenclaw here?"

"Funny, Luna. So wait then, if Tom didn't do it to you, why are you all metal all of a sudden?"

As quickly as it'd appeared, the human side of 'Luna' disappeared and the colder, artificial personality reasserted itself. "I am a cybernetic organism known as a Terminator; a Kaliba Group class TOK624.42 to be precise. I was built in 2026 by an artificial intelligence known as Skynet to serve as an infiltrator in their war against humanity. I was captured, modified, and reprogrammed by General John Connor and his assistants, Hermione Granger and Tracey Davis, and sent back in time to protect Harry Potter while affecting various changes in the timeline. My skin sheath is living tissue and portions of it died when subjected to the basilisk's stare, along with most of my hair. Both will regenerate with time and nutrients."

Coming to an abrupt stop, Ginny let out a sigh followed by a chuckle. "I'm trying to be serious here, Luna."

"Why would you want to be Harry Potter's godfather?"

As he watched the two younger girls—or rather one younger girl and one Merlin-knew-what—resume their trek back towards the blocked passage leading to Myrtle's bathroom, Harry shook his head slowly. Every time he thought he was finally getting used to the magical world, something new came along to disabuse him of that notion.

Wait. He had a godfather?

3. Power of the Sun (DC Comics)

Title: _Power of the Sun

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumper—or err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. As for the Superman franchise and all its assorted characters—who the shit knows; people keep suing and countersuing over who owns it. Let's just go with 'not mine' and leave it as that.

>Summary: "The Goblet of Fire! Anyone wishing to submit themselves to the tournament need only write their name upon a piece of parchment and throw it in the flame before this hour on Thursday night. Do not do so lightly! If chosen, there's no turning back."

>Joe's Note: This is third in the 'Adventures Luna Never Had' series. Up next—who knows? My mind is a mysterious and scary place most days. For now, though, enjoy this little bit of fun. I had intended to do this set during _Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire_, but then my mental image of Luna shifted a bit and I decided to push the tournament back. So we're going to be visiting an AU where Harry Potter won and—or well, it's all explained in the story. Enjoy.

>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing.

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><p>"Amazing! Li Alezae gives us a look at the magic of her ancestors as she summons a water elemental to defeat her foe. The Chinese Fireball is down and Alezae has retrieved her egg! And now for her scoresâ€| "<p>

Grumbling, Harry Potter leaned back in his seat, watching as the slim half-Chinese, half-French representative of Beauxbatons made her way off the converted quidditch pitch, golden egg tucked under her arm. After his defeat of Voldemort, a number of students had expressed an interest in returning to finish their education and Headmistress McGonagall had temporarily expanded the school to include 'eighth year' dorms for each house, folding the students in with the seventh year students to attend classes. To celebrate his defeat of wizarding Britain's greatest menace, the Ministry of Magic had convinced Beauxbatons and Durmstrang to allow a second straight Triwizard Tournament to be held at Hogwarts, after which it would resume its normal triennial pattern and begin cycling through the participating schools. The First Task was centered around 'remembering and learning from history' and thus had been announced the night of the champions' selection so the three schools' champions could prepare. Strangely, while both Fleur and Viktor had returned to coach their respective schools' new champions, nobody had sought him out to ask for advice on how to handle stealing a golden egg from a dragon.

Then again, the fact that someone else should - or could - be asking him for advice was a bit of a sore point with Harry at the moment. "I can't believe I didn't get picked to be Hogwarts' champion. I'm actually legally eligible this time, and I didn't get picked." He glared down at the tent on the edge of the tree line balefully, waiting for the next contestant to emerge. "I mean, who is this 'Luna Lovegood', anyways?"

Sighing, Hermione Granger rolled her eyes and slapped her boyfriend upside the head with the program that each spectator had been given upon entering the stands around the quidditch pitch. "Someone the Goblet of Fire found to be a more worthy champion for Hogwarts than you, whoever she is. Just because she's not part of our group and didn't help fight against the Death Eaters doesn't make her a bad person, Harry. She's a Ravenclaw, after all, and Rowena Ravenclaw was famous for saying 'wit beyond measure is man's greatest treasure'. I mean, what we did was brave and noble, but it certainly wasn't the smart thing to do from the viewpoint of someone who looks at things logically."

"And that'd be great, if we weren't talking about Loony Lovegood, Mione." Ron Weasley leaned across Harry, staring at Hermione even as he gestured at the tent where the girl in question was waiting. "Loony wears radishes for earrings. And a necklace made of corks. Don't even get me started on the weird shit that comes out of her mouthâ€| last week, she walked up to Lavender and I while we were snogging and asked if we'd seen any nargles." The petite blonde at Ron's side blushed even as her boyfriend's ears turned red at the memory. "That girl isn't right in the head, and I don't care what the Goblet of Fire says, she's definitely not champion material."

A chuckle came from in front of them and Harry's scowl shifted to the head of black hair in front of him, marred by a single streak of white. "What's so funny, Skunk?"

Turning to look back at him, Lara Ramsay just grinned at him, eyes twinkling behind her purple, plastic-framed glasses. "I think you'll be surprised by how good of a champion Luna turns out to be. Although I have to admit, I'm going to enjoy taking your money, Potter. What did you put into the Weasley twins' pool? Twenty-five galleons says she doesn't make it more than two minutes before calling for help?"

"Harry James Potter!" Oh Lord, he was getting full-named. He was in trouble now. Peeking over at Hermione, he found the brunette glaring at him, arms crossed over her chest. "Did you bet against your school's own champion?"

"Would you believe me if I told you Skunk was lying?"

"No."

"Bugger."

* * *

><p>Humming tunelessly to herself as she worked, Luna Lovegood carefully removed the plethora of extensions that helped her transform from the young woman the muggles of Ottery St. Catchpole - and countless other places around the world - were used to seeing into the long-haired girl her peers were familiar with. Nearby, her silver contacts were sitting in a white plastic container, patiently awaiting her return. Out of the three Triwizard Champions, she had picked the most dangerous dragon, which gave her the 'bonus' of being given extra preparation time as the other two faced their dragons. Or it would have, if she needed any sort of preparation for this task. Luna giggled. Oh no. She was very well prepared for this task. Very well indeed.<p>

Her confidence coming into the task had certainly shocked everyone around her. She had emerged from relative obscurity for this event, going from the strange girl that skated through her schooling and barely talked to anyone to the Hogwarts Champion and center of intense scrutiny. Luna couldn't wait to see her classmates' faces after the task. After all, she was 'Loony' Lovegood. How could she possibly have what it took to face a dragon? While there was a large betting pool going on who would take the top placement, a second pool had sprung up betting on how long it would take for her to be forced to concede the task. Using her friend Lara as an agent, Luna had placed a few bets with the intention of splitting any winnings with the Hufflepuff. And so even if Luna somehow managed to place dead last - which she knew she wouldn't - they would still come out of the First Task with greatly fattened purses to bring along on their next visit to Hogsmeade.

Applause roared through the arena, loud enough that Luna didn't even need her enhanced abilities to hear it, and she rose to her feet. Any second, it would be her turn. Looking down, she ran one last check of her outfit. She'd had to switch out capes for the day, opting in favor of one that - while red like all her others - was cut to fall around her body and envelop it like a robe, making her look like just another witchâ€| at least until she started moving. Parting it, she ran her hands up and down her sides a few times, smoothing out a few

nonexistent wrinkles in her white leotard before tugging first on the cuff of one blue glove and then the other, finishing by checking her matching blue boots. Idly, she found herself wondering what the three parents who couldn't be in the stands today would think of what she was about to do. Hopefully they were watching. Hopefully she was about to make them proud.

Luna waited patiently, knowing that it would take a bit for the handlers to herd one dragon off the quidditch pitch and then move hers into position. Looking around to make sure she was alone, she slowly bent backwards, listening to her vertebrae crack and pop as she worked out the kinks. Then, when she was as far back as she could be with her hands pressed against the ground, she floated a few inches up into the air to give herself more room to work with and continued to bend backwards until she finally felt the slightest stirring of discomfort. After holding the position for a few seconds, she flipped end over end over end over end and let herself drop back to the ground, feeling refreshed and ready to fight a dragon.

Which was good, because that was exactly what she was planning to do.

Then she heard the whistle blow and Luna began to hum again, skipping as she made her way out of the tent, past a few trees, and then down a tunnel that led her out onto the quidditch pitch. Her wide blue eyes swept back and forth, taking everything in as she filed away every last detail for possible use. There were hundreds and hundreds of people watching her, she realized; she'd expected an audience for this little coming out party of hers and was used to working in front of crowds, but the last time she'd seen this many witches and wizards in place was— she couldn't think of a time, to be honest. It was rather impressive to see. The stands they occupied were wooden, which probably wasn't a very bright idea given she was about to face a dragon. Oh well. Not her problem.

The dragon, on the other hand— it was her problem. Luna eyed her opponent carefully, watching as it shifted from side to side protectively over a clutch of eggs. With each movement, Luna could see the sunlight glint off the golden egg, marking it for easy retrieval. The dragon's wings were half-furled, ready to extend at a moment's notice, and its tail thrashed back and forth viciously, the spikes on it digging yard-long gouges in the hard ground. Noise poured from the crowd, most of it unfriendly jeers that seemed to affect the dragon more than her, but Luna blocked it out. What her peers thought of her hadn't slowed Luna one whit for the last six years and it wasn't going to affect her performance now.

It was time for the world to learn that there was more to her than what she let them see. More than the mask of 'Loony' Lovegood. More than even Luna Lovegood.

It was time for the world to meet Luna Zor-L, daughter of Zor-L and Alura In-Z. Luna Zor-L, the last daughter of Krypton.

Spreading her arms to give the crowd a good look at her unusual - and revealing - outfit, Luna smiled faintly before tapping into her powers and floating up off the ground. "—sweet Merlin! Is she— am I seeing things? Is that girl flying?!" Ludo Bagman's astonished voice rang out over the enclosure, making Luna's grin widen even further as the crowd suddenly fell silent. Giving a slow pirouette,

she took in all their faces. Some were disbelieving, some stared in aweâ€¦ and this was the least of her secrets. Completing her spin, Luna came face-to-face with the dragon again and paused for a long moment before tipping forward and charging it.

Phase one: diversionary tactics. While there was a possibility she could slip underneath, grab the egg, and get away, the speeds she'd have to move at would leave her extremely vulnerable. Even a lucky glancing blow could send her out of control and into the stands, harming innocents. So she'd lure the dragon away, then double back to reclaim her egg. And so Luna went to work, charging at the dragon's head only to spin to the right at the last moment and slip past, the beast's giant teeth snapping at her fluttering cape as she passed.

"Look at that girl go! Even the great Albus Dumbledore wasn't able to fly without the use of a broom or someone casting a charm on them, but we have a barrier in place to keep our champions from receiving outside help. Ladies and gentlemen, Luna Lovegood is somehow defying one of the fundamental laws of magic!" Luna giggled a bit at that as she circled around behind the dragon's head, drifting in closer so she could run her fingers along its skin as she flew forward again. Oh, if only Bagman knewâ€¦ no magic, just a mix of willpower and good breeding. "Oh! She just touched the Horntail and it does not lookâ€¦ look out, Miss Lovegood!"

There was a giant roar from behind her, one that had nothing to do with the crowd, and Luna twisted to stare back at her dragon. Deep in the gaping maw before her, she saw the first sparks light and then a torrent of fire streamed forth, crossing the distance between them in mere seconds. In that time, Luna took a deep breathâ€¦ and blew. And blew. And blew. Hurricane force winds battled with dragon fire, chunks of ice dropping to the ground far below and shattering on impact as Luna's breath began to overwhelm the dragon's natural weapon. Finally, the Horntail gave in and snapped its jaws shut, turning its head to try and avoid the bitter cold as it brought its tail up to slam hard into her side.

Luna grunted with the impact, tumbling through the air to her left for a few yards before regaining control and whirling to face the dragon once more. "Oh! That had to hurt! Miss Lovegood has sufferedâ€¦ no injury that we can see?" Reaching down, Luna felt at her leotard. That sounded about right. Her body would resist the injury easily, and she'd made sure to make sure that her outfit was as tear-resistant as possible to keep others from seeing exactly how invulnerable she really was. "Well I'll be! As far as I can see, all it did was tear her cape!"

"My cape? You tore my cape?" Luna tugged at the red fabric, pulling it around her body so she could see the great rip where one of the dragon's tail spikes had punched through. "Youâ€¦ youâ€¦ ugh!" Granted it wasn't her normal, fully enchanted cape but she'd still put a lot of work into making it as close as possible over the last few weeks. "That's it. Gloves are off." Stripping off one blue glove and then the other, Luna debated for a moment before flying over to where Lara was sitting in the stands, handing them to favorite Hufflepuff. "Here, hold these."

Because it was time for phase two of her plan: punch the dragon.

* * *

><p>"â€|she just knocked out a dragon. By punching it in the head. Once."<p>

Rising, Lara stretched before turning to grin at Harry as the rest of the silent stadium watched Luna and her golden egg depart through the same tunnel she'd arrived via. "Yep. And then she flew around a bit more so she'd come in right on the time we agreed on, dove down, and finally collected her egg. Three minutes and twelve seconds: well within the 'three to five minutes' I put a bet on, but far enough past three minutes that the Weasley twins won't be able to argue whether or not she passed the threshold. Thank you, Mister Potter, for helping make us a pair of very rich girls."

Still more than a little annoyed with her boyfriend on several levels - not to mention a bit curious about this strange new version of a girl she'd spent five years sharing a school with - Hermione pulled away from Harry and gave chase as Lara departed the bleachers, thundering down the rickety wooden steps and heading towards the tent that housed the three champions. The aurors guarding it didn't challenge either of them and so Hermione followed Lara inside, letting the Hufflepuff lead her over to a black divider emblazoned with the Hogwarts crest. Behind it, she found Luna tipping her head back as she poked at her eye with one finger. Hermione's jaw dropped. Someone other than her in the wizarding world knew what contacts were?

Then Hermione's gaze dropped about a foot south and if her mouth hadn't already been wide openâ€| wow. Granted the school uniforms were hardly designed with sex appeal in mind, but they weren't entirely repulsive andâ€| where had Luna been hiding those for the last year or two? Or three or four; she must have started puberty awfully early to end up that gifted at her age. To quote Ronâ€| bloody hell. Hermione wasn't even attracted to girls and even she thought Luna looked amazing.

Or was she? Attracted to girls, that was? All of a sudden, Hermione realized that while she'd gone to the Yule Ball with Viktor and was now dating Harry, both were more about a mental and emotional connection than physical attraction. And for some reason? Not only could she easily admit to herself that she found Luna attractive, but Hermione couldn't for the life of her manage to stop staring at the younger girl. Sudden movement made Hermione jerk her head up guiltily, only to find Luna staring at her and lookingâ€| amused, dare she say? Casting about for a safe conversational opener, Hermione's eyes landed on the blonde's greatly shortened locks. "Luna! When did you cut your hair?"

Luna blinked owlishly, reaching up to play with the ends of her long bob for a moment before looking down at her outfit. Or, like Hermione, at where a hole cut in the center of her leotard's chest was exposing a kilometer of cleavage. "â€|you actually noticed the hair?"

"Well, yes. After a fashion."

4. In Your Eyes (Say Anything)

Title: _In Your Eyes

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumperâ€| err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. _Say Anythingâ€|_ is the property of Gracie Films and Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, while "In Your Eyes" belongs to Peter Gabriel. Not mine, don't sue, and so forth and so on.

>Summary: For some reason, the first question that came to Hermione's mind wasn't why Luna was hovering outside her dorm window on a broom. It wasâ€| "When did Luna see 'Say Anythingâ€|'?"

>Joe's Note: This one goes out to Lexi, because she mentioned she was listening to this song about the time I was doing the Luna/Hermione-centric bit for _Power of the Sun_ andâ€| yeah. It just sorta exploded in my head from there. Enjoy.

>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing.

* * *

><p>"Loveâ€| I get so lost sometimes. Days pass, and this emptiness fills my heart. When I want to run away, I drive off in my car. But whichever way I go, I come back to the place you are."

Hermione Granger blinked slowly as she was pulled from a very sound sleep byâ€| something. Noise, an unusual noise, beyond the normal nighttime chorus that included Jen's soft snores and Parvati's muttered divinatory predictions. The former was white noise to her after so many years. The latter, she really wished she could record. Evidently, Parvati's subconscious was also a believer in the existence of nargles. The noise slowly grew louder, and Hermione's eyes widened as she realized that it was music. Not just any music, though. Muggle music.

"All my instinctsâ€| they return. And the grand facadeâ€| so soon will burn. Without a noise, without my pride, I reach out from the insideâ€| "

Who was listening to muggle music at Hogwarts? And how? And why atâ€| Hermione pulled her wand out from beneath her wand, wordlessly casting the Time-Keeping Charm and watching as smoke curled out of the tip of her wand. 02:03. Two in the morning? It was then that the lyrics actually penetrated her sleep-addled brain and Hermione groaned. She didn't know the how, but suddenly she had a good idea as to the 'who' and the 'why'. Rolling out of her bed, she stomped over to the windowâ€| and then brought her forehead down to thump noisily against the glass at the sight of Luna Lovegood floating on a broom, a wizarding wireless held up over her head.

_"In your eyes, the light, the heat, I am complete. I see the doorway to a thousand churches, the resolution of all the fruitless searches.

Oh, I see the light and the heatâ€¦ oh, I want to be that complete! I want to touch the light, the heat I see in your eyesâ€¦" _

Thanks to the music outside, Hermione felt rather than heard the arrival of one of her roommates asâ€¦ Lavender, she was guessing, based upon the shape of the body pressed against her back, peered over her shoulder at the floating spectacle outside Gryffindor Tower. "Hermione? It's two in the morning. Why is your girlfriend floating outside our dorm playing music?"

Hermione grimaced before deciding to try going with a lie; she knew Lavender didn't entirely approve of her dating Luna and had no desire to share her relationship difficulties with Hogwarts's biggest gossip. "Iâ€¦ don't know?"

"Me either. And I don't care. Just make it stop. Now."

Lips quirking at Lavender's no-nonsense answer, Hermione looked back over her shoulder at the blonde. "But in the movie, Diane just rolls over and ignores Lloyd."

Lavender just scoffed at that, pushing off of Hermione's back before wandering back towards her bed. "I'm betting Diane didn't have roommates. You do. And we want to go back to sleep. So deal with her! Now!"

"Yes, ma'am." Giving Luna one last look, Hermione raced over to her trunk and dug out the last Weasley sweater she'd received before earning Molly's ire by daring to not be romantically interested in her precious baby boy, tugging it over her head and thenâ€¦ pausing. How was she supposed to go out and talk to Luna to get her to stop bothering the others? Oh! Harry! Or, more precisely, Harry's Firebolt. She could sneak into his dorm and 'liberate' his broom for a bit, and as long as she had it back before he woke - and didn't crash it into the tower while trying to fly over to where Luna was - he'd never even know.

Assuming she didn't crash his top-of-the-line, very expensive, professional grade broom. Hermione nibbled her lower lip nervously. Maybe that wasn't such a brilliant plan after all.

Mind whirling as she wandered towards the door, Hermione didn't see the attack coming until something collided with her knees hard. Grimacing in pain, Hermione looked down to discoverâ€¦ a broomstick? Her eyes ran from the mass of bristles up the shaft to the hand holding it, then up along the owner's arm to where Fay had one eye cracked open as she peered out at Hermione from behind sleep-mussed brown hair. "Last time I checked, you couldn't fly on your own. And tell Luna that her taste in music isn't badâ€¦ or at least it won't be when it's not the middle of the night."

"Oh. Thanks. And I will."

"Good. Now go shut her up. We have Potions first tomorrow morning and unlike you and Potter, I actually have to work to pass that class."

Title: _Magical Thunder

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumperâ€| err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. Since the story takes concepts from the source material, I feel I should mention that Toei Company owns _BakuryÅ« Sentai Abaranger_ along with BVS Entertainment being the people behind _Power Rangers Dino Thunder_. Not mine, don't sue, et cetera.

>Summary: A hidden force lies in wait to protect Hogwarts, one that not even the greatest of wizards can comprehendâ€|

>Joe's Note: This originally was written to accompany a two page comic that never got completed and has sat on my hard drive ever since. I've already copied out a bit of it to use in another Luna-centric story, but I figure that offering it up in its original form might be a good idea too. Enjoy.

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* * *

><p>Harry Potter skidded as he turned a corner, his trainers slippery with blood. Snape had an immense head start. Was it possible that he had already entered the cabinet in the Room of Requirement and escaped, or had the Order taken steps to secure it, to prevent the Death Eaters retreating that way? He could hear nothing but his own pounding feet and his own hammering heart as he sprinted along the next empty corridor, but then spotted a bloody footprint that showed at least one of the fleeing Death Eaters was heading toward the front doors. Good. Hopefully the Order had blocked off the Room of Requirement and that would funnel all the Death Eaters to one spot if they wanted to escape.<p>

As Harry slid around another corner, a curse shot past his head. He dove behind a suit of armor for cover, the spell striking it and causing it to explode in a shower of metal shards. Harry spotted the brother and sister running down the marble staircase ahead of him and fired off several spells at them, but merely hit several of the multitude of portraits that lined the wall, sending the occupants scrambling into neighboring frames for cover. As he emerged from behind the wreckage of the armor, Harry heard more shouts and screams. Bigger; other people within the castle seemed to have awoken and were likely emerging from their dorms to see what the fuss was, giving the Death Eaters even more targets.

"Shit shit shit." Harry raced toward a shortcut, hoping to overtake the Carrows and close in on Snape and Malfoy, who must surely have reached the grounds by now. Remembering to leap over the vanishing step halfway down the concealed staircase, he burst through a tapestry at the bottom and out into a corridor where a number of bewildered and pajama-clad Hufflepuffs stood.

Ernie Macmillan was the first to find words. "Harry! We heard a

noise, and someone said something about the Dark Markâ€|"

Shaking his head, Harry pushed Ernie and Justin apart so he could shove through. "Out of the way!" He sprinted toward the nearby landing and down the remainder of the marble staircase, reaching the Entrance Hall. The oak front doors had been blasted open, there were smears of blood on the flagstones, and several terrified students stood huddled against the walls, one or two still cowering with their arms over their faces. The giant Gryffindor hourglass had been hit by a curse and the rubies within were slowly trickling out, falling onto the flagstones below and shattering. And standing between the remains of the doors, wand in her hand as she held the Death Eaters at bay wasâ€| "Luna?"

"Move, you foolish girl." The giant blonde he'd seen fighting Tonks earlier stepped forward, pointing his wand at Luna. "I know the Lovegoods are purebloods. Even if your father's made a few bad choices in the past, you can always repent and join our lord in his crusade to preserve the noble traditions of our kind. You don't need to die tonight."

Luna raised her free hand and brought it up to her chest, a sparkle of green attracting Harry's eye as the light glinted off a large emerald set in an unfamiliar, clunky silver bracelet. Her voice wasn't misty as Harry was used to, but rather hard as steel. "Neither do you, but you've made your choiceâ€| and in turn have forced my hand. I call upon the spirits of the past! Velociraptor, grant me your power!" Twisting her wrist caused the gem to flare with a bright, inner light and when it died down, the bracelet was gone and replaced with a strangeâ€| Harry squinted. It almost looked like the head of an animal? That was a rather accurate assessment, he realized with further scrutiny; it had a green upper half and a silver lower jaw that moved as Luna pushed on it. Twirling her wand, Luna tucked it safely into place behind her ear before bringing her left hand up next to her head. Drawing her left hand across her body, she twisted at the waist as she pulled that hand back and punched her right hand outward. "Dino Thunder, Power Up! Ha!" Her right hand reached over to grab at the strange device on her wrist, and Harry shielded his eyes as the world exploded into green light.

* * *

><p>"â€|bloody hell! What was that?" Hermione instinctively opened her mouth to chastise Ron for his language but then thought better of it. The school was under attack by Death Eaters. Now was a perfectly acceptable time to be cursing. Flicking her wand, she wrapped the last downed Death Eater in ropes and - for once in her life - decided against hypothesizing in favor of skipping straight to investigating.<p>

The blast of bright green light, almost the exact same color as a Killing Curse, had come from the Entrance Hall and so that was where Hermione headed. Reaching the landing for the staircases that formed the core of the school, she descended as rapidly as she could. It wasn't until she reached the third floor, though, elbowing through a group of Ravenclaws to get a better vantage point, that she finally spotted something amiss. And what she saw definitely counted as amiss. For as odd as the wizarding world was sometimes, and as many strange and wonderful things as Hermione had seen, she was fairly certain that even they drew the line at green and white spandex

jumpsuits paired with odd, animalistic-looking green helmets. "What the fuck?"

"Hermione! You swore!" Ron looked scandalized as he puffed to a stop beside her, face flushed with exertion. "You never swear! That's one of the signs of the apocalypse, it is. Andâ€¦ hello there." Catching sight of the green-clad figure, her boyfriend came to an abrupt halt, eyes taking on the same glazed look as when he was around a veela. "Blimey. She'sâ€¦ wow. They don't make witches like that around here. Not sure I like the color, though. Does she come in red?"

Hermione went to slap her boyfriend upside the head before realizing that he'd spotted something she herself hadn't: the spandex-wearing figure was indeed a girl. Caught up in the oddness of it all, she'd allowed her analytical side to become derailed and Ron of all people had noticed something before her. She felt deeply, deeply ashamed.

The crowds on the stairwell waited with baited breath as they continued to watch the standoff below, the green girl holding the Death Eaters at bay with her presence alone. Movement in the corner of her eye made Hermione glance over and she sighed in relief as Harry sidled up next to her. When he'd run off before, she'd been worried about him getting hurt or even killed in some insanely brave but equally stupid act. And she'd seen Neville and Ginny upstairs. That meant that out of their little group, five of six were accounted for. "Have you seen Luna?"

"You could say that." Harry let out an odd, slightly hysterical chuckle before gesturing down at the mysterious figure in the Entrance Hall. "You're looking at her, Hermione."

This was starting to become a bit of an uncomfortable theme butâ€¦ what the fuck? Hermione stared in disbelief as Luna pulled some kind of futuristic-looking gun out of a holster over her right hip, arm snapping out away from her body and causing the gun to transform into a sword. This wasâ€¦ utterly unlike anything she'd ever seen in her research about anything in the wizarding world. They had no guns. They certainly didn't have guns that turned into swords. And spandex? Forget about it. So was this all a different kind of magic, new and previously unknown to herâ€¦ or something else altogether?

"No more pain. No more suffering. No more destruction. It ends tonight." Luna twirled her sword twice before switching to a two-handed grip and holding it out in front of her. "Youâ€¦ end tonight."

The Death Eaters held position for one moment longer before the huge blonde growled and hurled a curse at Luna. Her sword whistled as she twirled, deflecting the black bolt of energy away from her body. That seemed to set off the others and they converged on her, all except for Malfoy, who plastered himself the wall and tried to inch past the mess, eyeing his schoolmate fearfully. As Luna jumped and twirled gracefully, using her sword to deflect what spells she couldn't avoid, Hermione had to admit he had the right idea. She was a bit scared of this Luna too.

That fear went to a whole new level as Luna slipped inside Alecko Carrow's personal space and brought her sword up. Luna slashed at the Death Eater, allowing the maneuver to carry her around to face the

others while presenting her back to her target. Before Hermione could shout a warning, the man's head fell to the ground, his body collapsing like a puppet with the strings cut.

Sweet Merlin.

* * *

><p>Good God. Luna had just killed a Death Eater. Harry stood with jaw dropped, watching as the Carrow brother collapsed to the stone floor of the Entrance Hall, blood spurting from his neck. Luna had killed a Death Eater. Whyâ€| why hadn't any of them ever thought of taking the battle to that level? Death Eaters didn't stun. They killed. The light side stunned and captured, the dark side led prison breaks and then went back to killing. The dark side was winning. How could they possibly win the war if they were afraid to actually win a battle?<p>

Harry suddenly spotted Snape beside Malfoy, the pair leaving the remaining Carrow and the massive blonde man to try and distract Luna so they could make an escape. His eyes narrowed. Murderer. Betrayer. Like hell he'd let the man get away. Pulling out his wand, Harry loosed a battle cry as he charged down the stairs. "Snape!"

"Move, Draco!" The dark-haired man gave his protÃ©gÃ© a shove as they scooted by past Luna, barely audible over the two-on-one battle raging between Luna and the remaining Death Eaters. "The Dark Lord wants Potter for himself. Staying and fighting him can only put us in a bad position with Him. We go, now!"

Reaching the bottom stair, Harry paused as he tried to figure out the best way to make it through the raging battle unscathed so he could pursue Malfoy and Snape. "Luna! I need a hole!"

Luna spun as she deflected one last spell before launching herself backward with an inhuman jump that put at least a dozen feet between her and her opponents. "On it!" Grabbing the blade of her sword, she didâ€| something. One moment it was a sword, and the next it was a gun again. Her free hand hovered over her belt buckle for a moment, summoning a second gun in a flash of golden light, and then she opened fire. With only a handful of green energy bolts, she reduced the Death Eaters to blood and gore on the hall's flagstones, eliciting screams from the spectators. "Oh hush. The helmet amplifies my hearing and I don't need you all giving me a migraine because I tried to save you."

Yet another decidedly un-Luna-like statement - combined with her very un-Luna-like behavior - left Harry wondering if he'd ever really known the blondeâ€| and then he set it out of his mind as he surged into motion again. Racing past her, he started momentarily as she whirled and joined him, easily keeping pace as they raced out into the night. "Out of all the Death Eaters to not shoot, you had to let these two pass?"

"Do you really want to criticize the killing skills of a girl who's younger than you but just took out half a dozen Death Eaters, Harry Potter?" Point. Luna cursed under her breath as they spotted two black-robed figures moving away down the lawn at a fair clip. Even at their top speed, there was no way either would reach Snape and Malfoy before the pair of Death Eaters reached the edge of the wards. Luna

evidently had a contingency plan for such a situation ready, though. Skidding to a stop, she brought her left arm up toward her mouth. "Velocizord, arise!"

While he wanted to open his mouth and question her sanity for talking to her bracelet, Harry never even had the chance. There was a mighty crash from within the Forbidden Forest and then a strange, trumpet-like call echoed over the grounds. Snape and Malfoy then too stopped to see what was going on, but before Harry could capitalize on their pause to close the distance and engage them, a green and silver shape exploded out of the tree line, trumpeting again as it charged. "Sweet Merlin. Is that a..?"

Luna giggled, looking over at Harry. "A giant robotic dinosaur? Yes, Harry. Yes it is." Turning her attention back to the device on her wrist, she whistled softly. "Cira? See those two men in black?"

The shocks of the night kept on coming when the strange bracer's red eye flashed and then the lower jaw of the dinosaur head began to move, a soft female voice with an American accent emerging. "Yes, Miss Luna. What of them?"

"Kill them."

With Luna's casual instruction, the dinosaur gave what was definitely a nod before trumpeting and wheeling around, charging toward the still motionless Death Eaters. That seemed to spur Snape and Malfoy back into action and they began running again, growing ever closer to the boundary of the wards. Harry himself swore and gave pursuit, alone this time as Luna opted to remain behind. Hopefully he could take them both, or maybe Malfoy would be too pathetic to fight, like in the tower. Harry gripped his wand tightly as he charged after them, and then a shout rent the night. "_Accio_ Harry!"

Harry flailed impotently as his feet left the ground, his body being yanked backward by an invisible force.

A split second later, a massive silver foot slammed down in front of him, crushing Malfoy and Snape beneath it. The spell abruptly dropped Harry onto his back on the lawn, and he pushed himself up on his elbows so he could watch as the strange mechanical dinosaur ground its foot down into the grass. If they hadn't died instantly, Harry assured himself, they were sure as hell dead now. Then the velociraptor switched motions, dragging the bottom of its foot back and forth several times. Eventually it let out a huff of discontent and turned around, passing Harry as it stomped back up the lawn.

Slowly climbing to his feet, Harry followed the dinosaur back over to Luna, watching as she rubbed her hand over one metal flank before reaching up and removing her green helmet. Her eyes were as changed as her voice, Harry saw, no longer wide pools of innocence and happiness. Instead, they had become jaded, flinty chips of slate grey. "Miss Luna?"

"Yes, Cira?"

"Doctor Oliver said we were only supposed to use the full might of our powers against the monsters that threaten your society."

"Monsters come in all shapes and sizes, Cira."

6. Coming Back Around (HtTYD)

Title: _Coming Back Around

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

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>Summary: "Night Fury!"

>Joe's Note: There's some overlap between this and _Magical Thunder_ because they're all from a single larger piece of source material: a rewritten piece from Chapter 28 of _Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince_. But, since all three feature drastically different crossovers, I decided to post them all. That way there's a little something for everybody. Enjoy.

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><p>Harry could see red hair flying like flames in front of him: Ginny was locked in combat with the lumpy male Death Eater, Amycus, who was throwing hex after hex at her while Ginny dodged them. Amycus was giggling, enjoying the sport. "Crucio! _Crucio_! You can't dance forever, prettyâ€|"

Narrowing his eyes, Harry raised his wand and jabbed it at Amycus. "_Impedimenta_!" His jinx hit the Death Eater in the chest, lifting the squealing man off his feet and slamming him into the opposite wall. He slid down it and fell out of sight behind Ron, Professor McGonagall, and Lupin, each of whom was battling a separate Death Eater. Beyond them, Harry could see Tonks fighting an enormous blond wizard who was sending curses flying in all directions, so that they ricocheted off the walls around them, cracking stone, shattering the nearest windowâ€|

"Harry, where did you come from?" Ginny reached out, trying to grab at his arm, but Harry shook her off. There was no time to answer her now. They could talk later, when he'd caught Snape. He ducked his head and sprinted forward, narrowly avoiding a blast that shot over his head, showering them all with bits of stone as it hit the wall. Snape could not escape, he had to catch up with Snapeâ€|

An uncommonly vicious look on her face, McGonagall whirled and sent a bolt of sickly orange energy at the sole female Death Eater, Alecto. She gave the same piggish squeal that her brother had emitted when struck and sprinted away down the corridor with her arms over her head, Amycus rising to his feet and stumbling along behind her. Harry launched himself after them but his foot caught on something and the

next moment, he was lying across someone's legs. Looking over, he saw Neville's pale, round face flat against the floor. "Neville! Are you-"

Neville nodded, a grimace on his face as he clutched at his stomach. "M'alright. Harryâ€¦ Snape 'n Malfoyâ€¦ ran pastâ€¦"

"I know, I'm on it!" From his spot on the floor, Harry shot a hex at the enormous blonde Death Eater who was causing most of the chaos. The man gave a howl of pain as the spell hit him in the face, wheeling around and following the others in retreating. Harry scrambled up from the floor and began to sprint along the corridor after him, ignoring the bangs issuing from behind him, the yells of the others to come back, and the mute call of the figures on the ground whose fate he didn't yet knowâ€¦

Harry skidded as he turned a corner, his trainers slippery with blood. Snape had an immense head start. Was it possible that he had already entered the cabinet in the Room of Requirement and escaped, or had the Order taken steps to secure it, to prevent the Death Eaters retreating that way? He could hear nothing but his own pounding feet and his own hammering heart as he sprinted along the next empty corridor, but then spotted a bloody footprint that showed at least one of the fleeing Death Eaters was heading toward the front doors. Good. Hopefully the Order had blocked off the Room of Requirement and that would funnel all the Death Eaters to one spot if they wanted to escape.

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"Shit shit shit." Harry raced toward a shortcut, hoping to overtake the brother and sister and close in on Snape and Malfoy, who must surely have reached the grounds by now. Remembering to leap over the vanishing step halfway down the concealed staircase, he burst through a tapestry at the bottom and out into a corridor where a number of bewildered and pajama-clad Hufflepuffs stood.

Ernie Macmillan was the first to find words. "Harry! We heard a noise, and someone said something about the Dark Mark-"

Shaking his head, Harry pushed Ernie and Justin apart so he could shove his way through between them. "Out of the way!" He sprinted toward the nearby landing and down the remainder of the marble staircase, reaching the Entrance Hall. The oak front doors had been blasted open, there were smears of blood on the flagstones, and several terrified students stood huddled against the walls, one or two still cowering with their arms over their faces. The giant Gryffindor hourglass had been hit by a curse and the rubies within were slowly trickling out, falling onto the flagstones below and shattering.

Harry flew across the Entrance Hall and out into the dark night. Ahead, he could just barely make out a handful of figures racing across the lawn, heading for the gates. The barrier they represented was more than just physical: they marked the edge of the plethora of wards that blanketed Hogwarts, Harry knew, and so beyond them lay disappearance and freedom for the Death Eaters. The huge blonde, two others that Harry didn't recognize off the top of his head, and Snape and Malfoy.

The cold night air tore at Harry's lungs as he raced after them. In the distance, he saw a flash of light that momentarily silhouetted his quarry. Not quite sure what it was, Harry continued to run, gradually closing in on his prey—or at least growing closer to a range he'd be able to cast accurately at. There was another flash, followed by shouts and retaliatory jets of light, and suddenly Harry understood: Hagrid had emerged from his cabin and was trying to stop the Death Eaters escaping. And even though every breath seemed to shred his lungs and the stitch in his chest was like fire, Harry forced himself to speed up. Hagrid had stood up against the aurors last year, but Death Eaters were hardly likely to stick to stunning spells and other simple fare—

Something slammed hard into the small of Harry's back and he fell forward onto the grass, his face smacking against the ground. Rolling over, blood pouring out of both nostrils, Harry cursed as he realized his mistake: he'd used his superior knowledge of the school to catch up with Snape and Malfoy, but that had left him sandwiched between two groups of enemies. The latter of which was now closing in on him. Damn it. He didn't have time for this. "_Impedimenta_" Given he hadn't really bothered to aim, it was hard to tell who was more surprised when his jinx hit Amycus Carrow: Harry, Amycus—or Alecko, who promptly tripped over her brother and fell atop him in a tangle of limbs and black robes. Hopping back to his feet, Harry sprinted on after Snape.

Growing closer to Hagrid's cabin, Harry saw the vast outline of his half-giant friend, illuminated by the light of the crescent moon as it broke through the clouds. The blonde Death Eater was aiming curse after curse at the gamekeeper; but Hagrid's immense strength and the toughened skin he had inherited from his giantess mother seemed to be protecting him. Snape and Malfoy, however, had decided to abandon their fellow Death Eater and were still running. Soon they would be at the gates, then beyond, able to disappear and beyond Harry's reach—but only if they reached the gates. Coming to an abrupt stop, Harry took aim at Snape's back. "_Stupefy_"

Given the distance between them, Harry was hardly surprised when the jet of red light went soaring past Snape's head. It did accomplish his goal though: Snape and Malfoy immediately stopped, turning to look back at him. Snarling, Snape drew his wand before shoving hard at Malfoy's shoulder. "Run, Draco!" Twenty yards apart, he and Harry looked at each other before raising their wands simultaneously.

"_Crucio_"

Harry instantly regretted not spending more time practicing non-verbal casting as Snape parried the curse, knocking him backward off his feet before he could complete it. Rolling over, Harry

scrambled back to his feet but before he could reengage Snapeâ€¦
"_Incendio_!" There was an explosive bang followed by a wave of hot air and orange light spilled over all of them. Harry glanced to his right, eyes widening at the sight of flames engulfing Hagrid's cabin.

Except Harry had no time to help his first friend now. He had a problem of his own to take care of. And so even though he knew it was an Unforgivable Curse, Harry figured the Ministry would probably forgive him if he used it to bring them the man who killed Albus Dumbledoreâ€¦ "_Cruc_-"

Sneering, Snape blocked the spell. "No Unforgivables from you, Potter! You haven't got the nerve or the ability!"

"_Incarc_-" Harry decided to switch to another spell in an attempt to catch the man off-guard, but Snape deflected it with an almost lazy flick of his arm. "Fight back! Fight back, you cowardly-"

The look of rage that suddenly twisted Snape's face looked entirely out of place on the normally unflappable man. "Coward, did you call me, Potter? Your father would never attack me unless it was four on one. What would you call him, I wonder?"

"_Stupe_-"

"Blocked again and again and again until you learn to keep your mouth shut and your mind closed, Potter!" Snape's sneer returned as he deflected away yet another spell before Harry could even finish it, and then turning his attention to his fellow Death Eaters. "Now come! It's time for us to go, before the Ministry tu-"

A familiar, almost musical roar echoed through the night and Harry grinned viciously at his former professor. Given that launching had the potential to be problematic, especially with the Room of Requirement and Astronomy Tower out of the question, he'd been wondering if their secret weapon would be able to make its long-awaited debut against the Death Eaters tonight. He'd only spotted four of his five closest friends on his race down from the Astronomy Tower. Now he knew why. "My mind's an open book to you, Snape? Then tell meâ€¦ what am I thinking now?"

"Night Fury!"

Snape's dark eyes went wide at Hagrid's shout and he had a split second to take in Harry's mocking wave before a ball of bright purple fire slammed into his chest, detonating and quickly engulfing him. Throwing up a shield, Harry spun away and dropped into a crouch as an awful heat washed over his body, too hot for even the special shield he'd practiced all year to absorb it all. In the end, though, knowing it allowed him to withstand the devastation brought on by an angry Night Fury. Of Snapeâ€¦ nothing survived save for Harry's contempt for the man. Rising to his feet, Harry spit at the dark burn mark on the ground in front of him. "For the record, in case you didn't find it in time? I was thinking 'You're fucked'." Looking up, Harry offered his friend a salute as she circled around before coming in for a landing beside him. "Good night for flying?"

Rearing back to sit on its haunches, the sleek black dragon beside him nodded decisively before shuddering and transforming into a very

familiar blonde Ravenclaw. "Someone needs to let Professor Flitwick know that whoever told him the walls and windows in our dorms are charmed to be unbreakable was lying. Malinda-Me managed to burn a hole in one quite easily." Luna Lovegood let out a little titter of laughter at that, and Harry was unable to keep himself from joining in. Generally speaking, people didn't take a dragon's fire into account when they declared something to be 'unbreakable' and they both knew it. "What's going on? The Defense professor usually doesn't turn evil and try to kill you for another two or three weeksâ€¦"

"Snape killed Dumbledore."

"Oh." Luna actually blinked for the first time that Harry could remember seeing before turning her attention to where Malfoy stood a dozen feet away, having disobeyed his mentor's last command. "Was Snape kidnapping Malfoy or something? He's just sort ofâ€¦ standing there. He looks confused."

"Actually, he disarmed Dumbledore but couldn't finish the job. That's when Snape killed him."

Surprisingly, Luna seemed more interested in that little tidbit than the fact that their professor had killed Dumbledore. "Malfoy disarmed the headmaster before his death, though, right? Malfoy attacked him first and then Snape?" Harry nodded and Luna's eyes narrowed. "I see." Leaning forward, she triggered her animagus transformation and hit the ground on all fours, tail swishing back and forth against the grass as she eyed the petrified Slytherin. Then her wings snapped out, one knocking Harry clean off his feet, and a single downbeat launched her up off the ground. With a shriek, she lunged towards Malfoyâ€¦

And Draco turned out to be no match for his namesake.

7. Katy Perry Moment

Title: _Katy Perry Moment

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: R/FR18

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumperâ€¦ err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. I'm not sure whether Katy Perry belongs to Katheryn Hudson or Capitol Music Group for manufacturing her. Not mine, don't sue, and so forth and so on.

>Summary: Drink in hand: check. Kissing girls: check. Cherry chapstick: â€¦well, she'd settle for two out of three.

>Joe's Note: It's not quite a songfic, so even if I didn't have a story entitled "I Kissed a Girl", I probably wouldn't have used that name. Mostly becauseâ€¦ well, the title I chose is a rather amusing little term I've picked up through Lexi and her lesbian friends: in her attempt to be hip and edgy and cool and sexy, Katy Perry inadvertently established herself as a derogatory term within the LGBT community. Being someone's "Katy Perry moment" is when you're the lesbian or bisexual girl who ends up making out with another girl whose attraction to - and interest in - girls rises and

falls in sync with their BAC. Which is essentially what's happening here. And before I end up with a header longer than my fic or somethingâ€¦| shutting up. Enjoy.

>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Crusifikz70, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing.

* * *

><p>"I'm drunk and I'm gay and it's wonderful!"<p>

Luna Lovegood's loud announcement brought the party in the Room of Requirement screeching to a halt for a few seconds as all attention turned to the flushed blondeâ€¦| and then there was a collective shrug and the students returned to whatever had been previously entertaining them. Namely drinking, assorted games, and snogging in the constantly evolving array of shadowy corners. Hermione Granger shook her head as she stunned two particularly rowdy Hufflepuff boys for their own good; the formerly square room was currently an irregular heptadecagon, although she doubted it'd be long before another amorous couple turned it into a octadecagon so that they too could have somewhere to get a little privacy. And since she had nobody to go enjoy such a corner with - and neither the heads nor the other prefects seemed at all interested in maintaining order - Hermione decided to take a short break from managing the drunken student body as a whole and focus on her friend.

Who was evidently exceedingly inebriated at the moment.

And celebrating a change of sexual identity.

Weaving her way through the crowd, Hermione made her way over to where Luna was sitting with her legs thrown over the leg of an armchair, both hands wrapped possessively around a bottle of Blishen's Firewhisky as she sipped at what little remained. When the blonde spotted her, she perked up and waved energetically. "Hullo, Hermione! And Hermione's twin! And Hermione's triplet!" Rolling her eyes, Hermione - who numbered only one last time she'd checked - reached out and took the bottle from Luna, causing the blonde to pout. "Hmmpf. If you'd wanted some, you could have asked. That was unusually rude of you, Hermione. Your sisters should take points away from you." Suddenly, she paused and cocked her head to one side. "They're prefects too, right?"

"I'm not sure they've invented a term for quite how drunk you are right now, Luna Lovegood." Vanishing the bottle she was holding to free up her left hand, Hermione pondered what to do with her thoroughly inebriated friend. Finally, she decided that the simplest course of action would be best: Ravenclaw Tower and the Room of Requirement were both on the seventh floor, so it wouldn't take long at all to levitate Luna back to her dorm. If she'd been in any other house, the portrait might have proved problematic but with the unique entry system the Ravensclaws utilizedâ€¦| the day she couldn't answer a simple riddle was the day she'd ask Draco Malfoy out on a date. Drawing her wand, the corner of her mouth quirked upward as she decided to switch back to verbal casting solely for the novelty factor of being able to sayâ€¦| "_Bibonius leviosa_."

Luna's silver eyes went - if possible - wider than normal and she let out peels of laughter as she floated in the air over the chair, somehow managing to move within the magic holding her aloft and roll over onto her stomach. "Whee! I'm flying on my own! I can defy the fundamental rules of magic! Iâ€| am a goddess!"

Reaching up to pinch the bridge of her nose with her free hand, Hermione waved her wand and slowly guided Luna towards the exit, trying her best not to laugh at Luna's infectious enthusiasm for 'flying'. Finally, she cracked and chuckled at the blonde's antics before twirling her wand, sending Luna into a barrel roll over a pair of Gryffindors who were flailing around trying to catch a renegade chocolate frog. They eventually reached the exit and Hermione pushed the door open before floating Luna out into the hallway. Given the distance to their destination, it didn't take Hermione long at all to reach the Ravenclaw common room and the bronze, eagle-shaped knocker. "Which came first, the phoenix or the flame?"

Oh, lovely. The wizarding version of the 'chicken and egg' question. And if she got it wrong, she'd be stranded here until another student finally came along. Hermione nibbled her lower lip uncertainly; she had a fifty percent chance of being rightâ€| and since there were two of them present, if she picked the wrong one, she could immediately ask the knocker to provide a second question and coach Luna through ans- "A circle has no beginning." Head whipping to the side, Hermione stared at Luna in disbelief as the door swung open. "I'm drunk, Hermione, not Ronald."

"That'sâ€| mean. True, perhaps, but still mean." Luna just shrugged at Hermione's half-hearted reprimand before stretching her arms back out in front of her to resume her 'flying' position. Entering the common room, Hermione took a moment to marvel at the arched windows hung with soft blue and bronze silks along with the domed ceiling painted with stars - secretly preferring both to the garish red and gold of her own common room - before directing Luna towards one of the staircases that led to the dorms. The blonde let out a vaguely negative sounding noise at that, making Hermione pause for a second before reorienting Luna to point at the other set of stairs. That earned her an approving noise and so Hermione set off towards the stairs, hurrying up them two at a time until she reached the top floor and entered Luna's dorm. There were four neat beds with neat trunks at their endsâ€| and one with its hangings charmed into a bizarre blue and bronze tie-dye pattern.

Well. That solved the problem of figuring out which bed was Luna's rather simply.

Floating Luna over to her bed, Hermione flipped back the covers before bringing Luna in for a landing. She knew there were spells to strip the girl down - knew the spells themselves, even - but given Luna's recent declaration, she didn't feel entirely comfortable going there. And so instead, she settled for removing Luna's shoes for her before covering the blonde and then perching on the edge of the bed. The two stared at each other for almost a minute and then Hermione couldn't hold out any longer, desperately wanting answer to one burning question. "So when did you figure out you were gay, Luna? Not that it's a bad thing. It's justâ€| a bit sudden."

Luna thought about that one for a bit before shrugging. "Not long

after Harry defeated He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, really." "What? "I mean, it was hard not to be happy that he was dead and that we'd finally have real professors again and the Ministry would go back to being— actually, I'm not sure the Ministry will change much, all things considered. It wasn't that great before You-Know-Who took over, if you think about it."

"Oh. You meant gay as in— not—" Hermione let out a hysterical little chuckle as she leaned her head back, staring up at the ceiling. Of course. The wizarding world was behind the world she'd grown up in almost every way. Why had she assumed that they'd be up to date when it came to colloquialisms? Looking back down at her friend, Hermione found Luna staring at her curiously. "Sorry. It's just that in the muggle world, that word is usually used to describe someone who prefers the company of the same sex." Luna blinked slowly. "In your case, it'd mean that you like to kiss girls."

After a few seconds, Luna nodded sagely. "If that's the case, I'm muggle-gay too. I enjoy kissing other girls very much. They're much softer than boys, and smell better too. I kissed Su Li and Astoria Greengrass at the party tonight. Su smelled like cinnamon and cloves; Astoria smelled like lavender. I liked Su's smell better but Astoria was curvier and softer."

Hermione could honestly say that she hadn't been expecting that one. And so for the first time in recent memory, words failed her. "Ah."

"You know, after Viktor and Cormac and Ronald, you might wish to consider kissing girls too. Kissing boys obviously isn't ending too well for you." Luna's words made Hermione wince; granted she'd never expected anything to come of attending the Yule Ball with Viktor and she'd never actually been interested in Cormac - and so that was akin to calling Harry and Parvati a romantic failure - but Luna was certainly right about Ron. Hermione had thrown away the better part of two years - and a whole bunch of self-worth - over the boy, only to see their relationship badly damaged by his abandonment during the horcrux hunt and permanently destroyed by him gravitating back towards Lavender after the Battle of Hogwarts. But just because her first real relationship had ended in failure didn't mean that- "You could start with me if you wanted to. I've always found you to be very pretty—"

Despite the warning klaxons blaring loudly in her head, trying to keep her from treading any further into this very dangerous territory, Hermione couldn't help herself. Her free-flowing supply of flattery had evaporated when a deeper relationship with Viktor failed to materialize; Ron had never been big on complimenting her even when they were dating. Not to mention that— well, Viktor and Ron were male. Luna was not. Why did Luna think she was pretty? Was it for reasons different from boys? And so before she lost her courage - or found where her common sense had wandered off to - Hermione blurted out the question gnawing at her. "What do you like about me?"

Luna slid one hand out from under the sheets, beckoning Hermione closer and then reaching up to cup the brunette's cheek after she'd complied. "Your eyes. They remind me of sticky toffee pudding— not the sauce or the ice cream, of course, the actual sponge cake part. They sparkle when you're excited and burn when you're angry or indigent—"

"I think you mean indignant."

"That too. They're the windows to your soul and you, Hermione Granger, have a very pretty soul." Hermione wasn't sure when it had happened, but she suddenly became very aware of the fact that her face was now only inches from Luna's. Before she could do anything to change that, Luna lunged up and pressed her lips to Hermione's, the hand on her cheek sliding around to the back of her head to hold the older girl in place. Evidently wanting to start small, Luna pulled back after a few seconds and smiled up at Hermione before peeking downward. "Oh, and your knockers are bloody amazing."

So girls who liked girls weren't wired too differently from boys who liked girls after all. For some reason, Hermione found herself both surprised and vaguely disappointed to discover that. Oh well. The strange but obviously heartfelt compliments about her eyes more than made up for it in her mind. Straightening up, Hermione brought her hand up to touch her lips as she stared off into space. The kiss had been better than nice. Amazing. Definitely better than Cormac, better than Ron, better than Viktor even. And this was Luna drunk. It had Hermione wondering what would kissing a sober girl be like? Or, well, Luna when Hermione was prepared for what was coming instead of being surprised by a fast-moving blonde?

Hermione nibbled her lower lip a bit more before coming to a conclusion, looking down to find Luna passed out, a bit of drool slowly escaping from the corner of her mouth and being pulled pillow-ward by gravity, her parted lips faintly stained by the Gryffindor red lipstick that Morag had convinced Hermione to wear that evening. Sliding off the edge of the bed, Hermione shook her head as she made her way towards the door. As always, stopping to think things through had come back to bite her on the arse. Nothing she could do about it now, though, and so she'd return to being the responsible one who kept an eye on her drunken peers. In the morning who knew? Luna had found the courage to start something tonight while drunk. Gryffindors were supposed to be the courageous ones. Maybe Hermione could find that same courage tomorrow when Luna was sober.

* * *

><p>In the bed with the tie-dyed hangings on the top floor of the Ravenclaw girls' dorms, Luna's eyes popped open and then she smiled widely. Wit beyond measure was man's greatest treasure and she'd just outwitted the smartest witch of their generation. When Ríichal Murray had told her that people tended to let their guard down around drunks, she'd been expecting to maybe get away with confessing her feelings for Hermione. But tonight tonight had wildly exceeded her expectations.<p>

Humming softly to herself, Luna slid out of bed and began stripping out of the clothes she'd worn to the party. There was no sense in showering now given that she'd just need to shower again in the morning before primping for Hermione's sake, but that didn't mean she wanted to sleep in a few layers of clothing. Being that uncomfortable might get in the way of good dreams about Hermione.

Title: _In My Head
>Author: JoeHundredaire
>Rating: PG-13/FR15
>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumperâ€| err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. "In My Head" belongs to Jason DerÃ¼lo or his record label; not quite sure how that works in this age of manufactured musical acts. Not mine, don't sue, and so forth and so on.
>Summary: Hermione's looking for love, oh. That's the reason she's at the club, oh. She ain't gonna find it dancing with him, no. Luna's got a better solution for her, uh huh.
>Joe's Note: First one in, last one out. This was the story idea that launched my recent foray into assorted Luna-centric stories. Couldn't it get it just right, though, so I decided to wait until it was perfect before releasing it. Enjoy.
>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Crusifikz70, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing.

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><p>"I don't think you should be an auror, Harry." Luna Lovegood's sudden interjection brought the conversation to a halt, silence falling as everyone turned to look at the elfin blonde Ravenclaw. "The aurors are part of the Rotfang Conspiracy, I thought everyone knew that. They're working to bring down the Ministry of Magic from within using a combination of dark magic and gum disease."<p>

In the middle of taking a sip, Harry Potter abruptly found himself inhaling half his mead up his nose as he started to laugh. Really, it had been worth bringing Luna just for this. Emerging from his goblet, coughing and sopping wet but still grinning, he saw something that promised to raise his spirits even higher: Draco Malfoy being dragged by the ear toward them by Argus Filch. "Professor Slughorn, I discovered this boy lurking in an upstairs corridor. He claims to have been invited to your party and to have been delayed in setting out. Did you issue him with an invitation?"

Malfoy pulled himself free of Filch's grip, looking furious at being put on the spot in front of a number of professors and assorted other important individuals. "All right, I wasn't invited! I was trying to gate crash, happy?"

"No, I'm not!" Filch's statement seemed at complete odds with the maniacal look of glee on his face. "You're in trouble, you are! Didn't the headmaster say that nighttime prowling's out unless you've got permission? Didn't he, eh?"

Unfortunately for Harry, Slughorn waved his hand dismissively at the caretaker. "That's all right, Argus, that's all right. It's Christmas, and it's not a crime to want to come to a party. Just this once, we'll forget any punishment; you may stay, Draco." Filch's expression of outraged disappointment was perfectly predictable - he seemed to live solely to make as many people as unhappy as possible -

but why, Harry wondered as he eyed his nemesis, did Malfoy look almost equally unhappy? And why was Snape looking at Malfoy as though both angry and - was it possible? - a little afraid?

But before Harry could put too much thought into what he'd seen, Filch had turned and was shuffling away as he muttered under his breath, leaving Malfoy to compose his face into a smile and thank Slughorn for his generosity and Snape to stand there looking like the overgrown bat he was. Interestingly enough, despite his willingness to let Malfoy stay, Slughorn didn't seem particularly interested in conversing with the Slytherin. "It's nothing, nothing. I did know your grandfather, after all"

"He always spoke very highly of you, sir. Said you were the best potion-maker he'd ever known" Harry found himself staring at Malfoy. It wasn't the sucking up that intrigued him; he'd watched Malfoy do that around Snape since his arrival at Hogwarts six and a half years earlier. No, it was the fact that Malfoy looked ill, almost. Their paths crossing infrequently, Harry hadn't seen Malfoy up close for ages; he now saw that Malfoy had dark shadows under his eyes and a distinctly grayish tinge to his skin.

As Malfoy turned, perhaps intending to slip into the crowd and either enjoy the party or return to what he'd originally been doing when Filch caught him, Snape's hand came down hard on his shoulder. "I'd like a word with you, Draco. Now."

"Oh, now, Severus, it's Christmas. Don't be too hard"

"I'm his Head of House, and I shall decide how hard - or not - to be. Follow me, Draco." The pair abruptly left, Malfoy looking resentful as he led the way, forced along by Snape's hand on his shoulder.

Harry stood there for a moment, uncertain of what to do, before finally coming to a decision and turning to his date for the evening. "I'll be back in a bit, Luna. Err, bathroom."

Luna stared at him unblinkingly for a long moment and Harry knew instinctively that she had seen right through his excuse. But apparently she didn't care. "Alright. Good luck." Yeah, she knew. Oh well. Who cared if he was a horrible liar? All that mattered was finding out what Malfoy - and apparently now Snape - were up to. His lips quirked up in a faint smile as he turned and disappeared back into the crowd, her voice reaching his ears over the crowd as she explained the Rotfang Conspiracy to Professor Trelawney

* * *

><p>Watching as Harry rushed out of the party, Hermione let out a growl of frustration. How was she supposed to hide from Cormac - or at least blunt his advances - if the only person she knew at the party was gone? This was turning out to be an immensely bad idea in hindsight. Just because 'Won-Won' wanted to act in an infantile manner and let Lavender slobber all over him didn't mean she needed to lower herself to his level. She was better than that, darn it. Better than him.<p>

"Hermione!" Oh no. Grimacing, Hermione slowly turned to find Cormac rushing towards her. "There you are. I was just talking to a few

members of the Holyhead Harpies, and Gwenog Jones - you know, their captain and one of the beaters - mentioned that one of their newest reserve members is a muggleborn like you and I thou-

Suddenly, there was a pulse of red light behind Cormac and his eyes went wide for a moment before shutting as he tipped over forward. A small squeak escaped from Hermione's lips as she dodged to the left, letting him pass through the space she'd just been occupying and crash to the floor. She stared down uncomprehendingly at Cormac's insensate form for a few seconds before looking up to find Luna standing there in all her spangly silver glory. "Cormac McLaggen only agreed to be your date because he was hoping to meet some of the quidditch players that were Slug Club members back when they were in school. I'm sorry, Hermione, but he's just not that into you."

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Well, it's not like I was 'into' him, Luna. I just asked him to come as my date to annoy Ron." And now that one of her friends had attacked him, even if she was inclined to try a move like this again, the odds of Cormac agreeing to it were somewhere between slim and none!

"I know, Hermione, I was there when you told Harry. Remember?" Oh. Right. Hermione winced, running one hand through her disheveled hair. God, tonight was turning into such a disaster. She just wanted to head back up to Gryffindor Tower, crawl into bed, and- "You should have asked me." What? Hermione fixed Luna with an incredulous look, the blonde staring back unblinkingly. "I noticed Ronald looking at me before he asked Lavender out; I think he was considering dating me to make you angry. So you asking me likely would have made him even angrier than you asking Cormac, because not only would you have been taking someone else, you would have been taking someone he was hoping to use against you at some point. And I'm a far better conversationalist than Cormac. Or at least I'd like to think I am."

Sadly enough, Hermione couldn't exactly argue with that one. Luna was also better behaved. And, thinking back on her night sitting there debating with Luna about whether or not there actually were nargles infesting the mistletoe would have been a lot more interesting than trying to avoid getting pawed by Cormac under it. There was just one problem with Luna's supposed solution to her Ron-baiting conundrum. "Harry asked you."

Luna reached out, taking Hermione by the hand and leading the unresisting girl out into the center of the room. "Harry asked me earlier today. If you'd asked before that, you could have been my date instead." Oh. Well, that explained why Harry hadn't talked about it with her any and why she hadn't heard about it until dinner that evening. Caught up in her thoughts, Hermione didn't even put up a token resistance as Luna brought Hermione's right hand up to rest on her shoulder before taking the left in her own. Wrapping her own right arm around Hermione's waist, Luna began to guide Hermione in slow circles around the floor. "And one, two, three. One, two, three!"

Watching as the world slowly whirled past around her, Hermione found her body instinctively falling into a familiar pattern of steps as her body submitted to Luna's gentle guidance. But while she knew what she was doing - at least in the literal sense - Hermione had no idea

why she was dancing in the middle of Slughorn's party with Luna. She wanted to, though. Know, that is. Well, she was quickly getting into the dancing and so she wanted that tooâ€| but she still needed to understand. And since there was really only one way to resolve the matter to her satisfaction, she opted to ask the blonde. "Luna? What are we doing?"

"The waltz. Slow waltz, if you want to be technical." Luna's quirky little smile made Hermione certain that the blonde knew exactly what she was being asked and was deliberately being evasive. How veryâ€| Luna. "If you'd rather try something else, we can wait for the Weird Sisters to play a song in common time and try tango or foxtrot?"

Hermione blushed brightly at the idea of being wrapped around the slim blonde Ravenclaw in some of the positions she'd seen her mother and father assume at their dance lessons while learning the Argentine tango. There was no saying that Luna was referring to anything more daring than the standard English-style tango, but just in caseâ€| "Let's stick to waltz."

"Tango later?"

"â€|maybe."

* * *

><p>"It is an act that is crucial to success, Draco! Where do you think I would have been all these years, if I had not known how to act? Now listen to me! You are being incautious, wandering around at night, getting yourself caught, and if you are placing your reliance in assistants like Crabbe and Goyle-"<p>

"They're not the only ones. I've got other people on my side, better people!"

"Then why not confide in me, and I can-"

"I know what you're up to! You want to steal my glory!"

There was a long pause, and then what little warmth had been in Snape's voice abruptly disappeared. "You are speaking like a child. I quite understand that your father's capture and imprisonment has upset you, but-"

Harry had barely a second's warning; he heard Malfoy's footsteps on the other side of the door and flung himself out of the way just as it burst open. Pressing himself back against the wall, he watched Malfoy stride away down the corridor, past the open door of Slughorn's office and then around the distant corner, disappearing from sight. Hardly daring to breathe, Harry remained crouched down as Snape emerged slowly from the classroom. His expression unfathomable, he returned to the party. Harry remained on the floor, hidden beneath the cloak, his mind racing. Whatâ€| what had he just heard? What did it mean? And what was an Unbreakable Vow, and what role did it play in whatever was going on?

Hermione would probably know.

Hermione.

Who was still at the party.

The party!

Cursing under his breath, Harry jumped to his feet and hurried towards the door of Slughorn's office, stuffing his invisibility cloak back into his pocket as he went. Pausing in the doorway to assess the best way to reenter the gathering, Harry noted the position of a few key individuals - Snape, Slughorn, Trelawney, Eldred Worple - and then plotted a path that would keep him as far from them as possible. Harry did his best to keep his head low as he bobbed and weaved around his peers, making his way toward the far side of his room. From there, he could establish an alibi of having been out of sight, rather than out of room, if anyone asked. Andâ€¦ Harry's brain abruptly short-circuited as he reached his destination and found it occupied.

By Hermione.

And Luna.

Who were kissing.

When they finally came up for air - thankfully without the sickening pop that seemed to accompany the end of Ron and Lavender's snogging sessions - Hermione's eyes went wide at the sight of him. Luna reacted far more calmly, looking back over her shoulder at him. "Harry. You spent a very long time in the bathroom. I was starting to worry about you."

Harry couldn't help but raise an eyebrow at that. 'Worrying'. Is that what they were calling what Luna and Hermione had been doing now? "You, uh, seem to have found a way of keeping yourself entertained."

"I have, haven't I?" Looking supremely pleased with herself, Luna snuggled closer to Hermione and rested her cheek on the brunette's shoulder. "After you left, I decided that I wanted to try my hand at your 'saving people' thing and decided to rescue Hermione from her date. That led to us deciding to keep each other company, which involved waltzing, and then a bit of West Coast Swing, and then a bit of mead because Hermione was still a bit too tenseâ€¦" Ah. And here Harry had thought the flushed cheeks were purely due to him catching them. "â€¦and then some tango, which led to kissing. That's when you showed up. Oh, and Harry? I think we should see other people."

Considering they had been there as friends, she didn't really need his permission or anythingâ€¦ but Harry couldn't help an incredibly stupid question from slipping out. "â€¦any chance I can keep seeing you seeing other people?"

"Hmm." Luna appeared to consider for a moment before shrugging. "I'd say your odds are about the same as being mauled by a polar bear and an owlbear in the same day."

Despite knowing her answer was essentially the equivalent of 'no chance in hell', Harry actually found himself pondering that one. "Well, if you think about it? I've already survived the Killing

Curse, being bitten by a basilisk, three dementor attacks, and two duels with Voldemort. The odds of something like that happening to me areâ€| well, pretty good."

Hermione and Luna exchanged surprised looks; clearly Luna hadn't taken that one into consideration before throwing out that particular answer. "Oh. Right. Hmm. So does that mean I'm supposed to let you watch then?"

Evidently, Hermione hadn't drunk quite enough mead to be amenable to that particular proposal. "Not if you want to get past first base with me, it doesn't."

"Oh. Well, I do want that. So sorry, Harry, but it looks like the answer is no."

9. Scarlet Fishnets (Marvel and DC)

Title: _Scarlet Fishnets

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumperâ€| err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. Both the Marvel and DC universes are copyright nightmares and so I'm not even going to try guessing who owns what. Let's just go with 'not mine' and leave it as that.

>Summary: Despite what her new mentors told her, Luna Lovegood was fairly certain this was not how a 'proper witch' was supposed to dressâ€|

>Joe's Note: This was written up mostly to lampshade a rather bizarre and growing clichÃ© within the _Harry Potter_ fandom, where the Room of Requirement can evidently conjure up perfect replicas of real people, allowing Harry to train with Godric Gryffindor/all four founders/Dumbledore after he dies/Grindelwald to understand the Dark Arts/a saner, younger Voldemort to learn his inner secrets/master swordsmen/elite muggle soldiers/anyone else you can think of and a few people you probably haven't. So I decided to take someone those authors haven't seen fit to use as of yet and have them seek advice from people that those authors definitely haven't used. Enjoy!

>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Crusifikz70, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing. Also, this one goes out to my lovely girlfriend Jenna and her habit of blurting out incredibly awkward things when trying to flirt with people, which in turn inspired the last eight hundred words or so of this story. I was going to end it with Tracey fleeing, but then Jenna opened her mouth around Olivia and my muse made an abrupt left turn.

* * *

><p>She'd made her way through the corridors to the correct stretch of blank wall opposite a tapestry depicting Barnabas the Barmy's disastrous attempt to teach trolls ballet, and walked back and forth

three times while thinking about needing to learn magic from Earth's most powerful witch. A door had appeared, she'd entered enthusiastically and a few minutes later, she'd come stumbling back out as someone either greeted or threatened her - she wasn't sure which - in a language she'd never heard before.<p>

On her second attempt, she'd walked back and forth three times while thinking about needing to learn magic from Earth's most powerful English-speaking witch. A door had appeared, she'd entered more cautiously and immediately she'd come diving back out, slamming the door shut behind her as curses and hexes impacted against the opposite side.

After that, she'd decided to step back and do some thinking, because clearly this plan of hers wasn't working out the way she wanted it to.

She'd returned to the seventh floor corridor two days later, stood in front of the blank stretch of wall for a few seconds as she composed her thoughts, and then walked back and forth three times while thinking about her need to learn magic from the world's most powerful, English-speaking, non-evil witches. Plural, this time, because if she was going to dream then why not dream big? Originally she'd been thinking of requesting 'light' or 'light or grey' or 'good', but for all she knew, the most powerful witch out there just chose not to involve herself in the petty affairs of society. Or would be offended by being labeled and therefore the room would skip over her. A door had appeared and Luna Lovegood had taken a deep breath before stepping inside.

That had been an hour and a half ago.

The first fifteen minutes had involved Luna speaking to the pair of witches that the Room of Requirement had created for her, explaining her needs and begging for them to help her. The sixteenth minute had consisted of them thinking and then agreeing to do so. The seventy-four minutes since then had raced past as Luna stood on a raised platform situated in the middle of five mirrors, her two new mentors slowly circling her as they debated with each other about how to best change her appearance, ignoring her protestations the entire time. "Not to tell you how to do your jobs or anything, but shouldn't you be trying to teach me things? Or - failing that - shouldn't I have a say in what happens to my body?"

"We've already started teaching you, Luna, and it's one of the most important lessons that you'll ever learn: looks are everything. And I'm not talking about how pretty you are or aren't, either. While your reputation may precede you, your looks are the first personal impression that you will ever make. People will pull apart your appearance in their head and analyze it as you approach them to start a conversation. Or even as you pass them in the street. If you want people to see you for the powerful, capable, confident woman that we're going to help you become? You need to look the part. As for the second question after what you had the gall to leave your room this morning wearing? No. No you do not get a say." Zatanna Zatara softened the rebuke with a smile and a peck to Luna's cheek before turning away from the now-blushing blonde in favor of consulting with her newfound partner in crime. "You saw her uniform. She just can't pull off black over a white blouse the way I can. So instead of coming up with something completely original - which has already

crashed and burned for us three times so far because we end up bickering over the basics, if you'll remember - I say we start with something more like your costume and then give it a bit ofâ€¦ Zatara pizzazz."

Wanda Maximoff slowly circled back around to stand in front of Luna, staring at her with critical blue eyes for several seconds before glancing back over at her companion. "That could be anâ€¦ acceptableâ€¦ way of meeting in the middle, Zatanna. I assume you're thinking of the sole costume I showed you that happens to feature pants, since Miss Lovegood doesn't seem to be quite as enamored with baring her legs as we are?"

Snorting, Zatanna sidled up to Wanda and wrapped her left arm around redhead's shoulders. "Of course not. That's the first thing every good witch learns when building up their work wardrobe: if you can't dazzle them with brilliance, make sure they're too busy ogling you to notice the trick flopping. You may not be wired to appreciate the female form 'that way', but as someone who is? Luna here has some killer legs for a girl her age. Covering those things would be a crime. But as fun as making her blush isâ€¦" No it wasn't. At all. Her face felt like it was going to burst into flames. She was probably as red at the moment as Ronald or Ginevra turned when they got upset about something silly, Luna thought with a grimace. "â€¦we have work to do. !noitidE strawgoH :revoekaM emertxE"

"I still don't understand why youâ€¦ eep!" Luna squeaked and hopped from one foot to another as her uniform - robe included - turned into a riotous mass of squirming, wriggling, living cloth. The transformation was too fast for her to keep track of; by the time she spotted each change and tried to analyze it, something else was changing and drawing her attention away. All in all, it took a matter of mere seconds to turn her from a respectable-looking fifth year Hogwarts student in a uniform trimmed in Ravenclaw blue and bronze to a ridiculously self-conscious girl wearing her own version of Wanda's distinctive costume. She was pretty sure part of her bum was exposed, she could feel air moving over far too much bare leg, and crossing her arms over her chest hid what cleavage she had from view but solved only one of her three major problems. Unsurprisingly, her sharp mind quickly deduced a way of dealing with both of her remaining problems simultaneously. "Are we sure that 'Zatara pizzazz' can't include a pair of pants?"

"No, but it will include fishnets."

"â€¦I don't see how that helps anything."

* * *

><p>"Oy! Loony! What the bloody hell are you wearing? And since when are you a Gryffindork?"<p>

Luna closed her eyes and exhaled slowly before turning to face the absolute last person she wanted to see while stuck in her current state. Wanda and Zatanna had both warned her that the magics they were casting on, around, and with her were very real thanks to the nature of the Room of Requirement and Hogwarts herself, but she hadn't believed them until she'd stepped out into the hallway at the end of her training session and her uniform had failed to reappear. She'd tried a handful of wanded spells and one from each of her

mentors' respective repertoires, but her uniform had quite stubbornly remained in its transfigured state. Given the Room of Requirement wasn't terribly far from the Ravenclaw Common Room, she'd been hoping to reach it unnoticed and change into a fresh uniform before her afternoon classes. Evidently, though, it wasn't meant to be.

But as Luna turned to face Draco Malfoy - and what looked like most of the sixth year Slytherins, for some reason - the words of her mentors ran through her mind. She had to be strong and confident to properly shape her magic, and the best way to practice that was to be strong and confident in every single moment of her life. And so rather than toss out a reference to creatures that nobody else believed exist or another suitably 'Loony' response, she instead opted to put her left hand on her hip and mimic a pose she'd seen Wanda affect numerous times during their time together. Smiling faintly, she trailed her free hand down the side of the red leather ensemble she was wearing. "Do you like it, Malfoy? I find it rather fetching, even if it isn't in my house's preferred color. Speaking of changing houses, though - I am curious why you haven't tried to leverage your father's influence to get yourself resorted into Gryffindor. You've been flirting with Harry Potter for my entire time at Hogwarts. Isn't it time to make a move?"

It took Malfoy longer than she expected to comprehend her insult, but eventually he sneered at Luna and drew his wand. "You know, I was just going to curse you on general principle. I mean, there's seven of us and one of you, with the nearest professor a few floors away. But for accusing me of being a poof, and into Scarhead of all people? Now - now I'm going to enjoy this." He made a sudden slashing movement with his wand, sending a streak of what looked like purple flame Luna's way.

"!ton kniht I" Thrusting both hands out, Luna bent her magic to her will and turned the incredibly dangerous curse - oh yes, she remembered what it had done to Hermione during the battle at the Ministry well - to ice, the frozen amethyst flames falling to the floor and shattering even as she whipped off the scarlet top hat that Zatanna had insisted on adding to her outfit. Twirling it around so that the mouth was pointed at her foes, Luna smirked and dragged an image from one of the few movies she'd caught while visiting Sidmouth to the front of her mind. "!seinnuB laprov"

The group of Slytherins tensed - only to let out a sigh of relief as one snow white rabbit and then another tumbled out of her hat, landing on the floor and looking around curiously. "I try to kill you - and you respond with rabbits?" Malfoy let out a derisive laugh at that, squatting down as he stared at the creatures. "Guess you really are as crazy as everyone says you are. Crabbe? Goyle? Target practice time."

Deciding that a bit of theatrical flair à la Zatanna would make her seem even more confident and powerful, Luna tossed the hat up into the air and twirled forward, letting her hair fan out around her and then drop into place against her back just as the top hat plopped down neatly atop her head. Her smirked turned into a vicious grin as she pointed toward the Slytherins. "Attack!"

Before the two thuggish boys could even finish drawing their wands, the rabbits had closed the distance between Luna and the Slytherins and were leaping into the air, fangs on full display as they went

straight for each boy's neck. Crabbe went down first, followed shortly by Goyle, the two boys rolling around as they yanked desperately at the rabbits and screamed in terror. "Fuck! Oh Merlin! Get it off me! Get it off!"

Reaching up, Luna curled a lock of hair around her finger as her remaining opponents looked back and forth between her and the fat flailing lumps on the floor uncertainly. Eventually, they managed to regain their confidence and opened fire, hurling a veritable rainbow of hexes and curses at her. Drawing on the tactics first taught to her by Harry the previous year and recently reinforced by her new mentors, Luna dodged what spells she could, only using magic for defense when absolutely necessary. No move was strictly horizontal, either, but rather diagonal as she slowly worked her way closer and closer to the Slytherins. Closer. Almost there. Almost— now! "Ithgilf ruoy yojnE" Luna thrust both hands out, bolts of scarlet magic erupting from her palms and slamming into Parkinson and Bulstrode hard, sending the two girls flying backward down the corridor. Even as Malfoy tried to process that most of his protection had been systematically stripped away, the blonde brought her right foot up between the pureblood's legs with all the force she could muster.

"You— bitch—" Wheezing, Malfoy dropped to his knees and then tipped over, curling into the fetal position.

Crouching down, Luna gently ran her fingers through her foe's platinum blond hair in a faux-tender caress. "I'm afraid that you're one letter off, Malfoy. I believe the words you were looking for were 'you— witch—'." Suddenly, the tip of a wand dug into her right temple and Luna frowned. Out of the corner of her eye, she could see pants and shoes similar to Malfoy's. But the blond was incapacitated at the moment, as were Crabbe and Goyle. By process of elimination, that meant she was being threatened by Theodore Nott— who she'd honestly forgotten about up until now. Luna might have been more put out by her lack of situational awareness if her foes were any more competent, but as it stood? Pivoting, she thrust both hands downward and release blasts of raw magic, propelling herself backward and up into the air. Twisting in midair, she hit the far wall feet first and let her knees absorb the impact before pushing off, launching herself back toward the dumbfounded Nott. Another nimble twist later and she was plowing into him with both feet, sending him flying back into the wall with a loud grunt even as she backflipped and landed gracefully in the exact spot she'd been kneeling in mere seconds before. Rising to her feet, she met the olive gaze of Tracey Davis. "Et tu, Davis?"

Tracey looked from Luna down at where Malfoy was still wheezing and cursing under his breath, and then over to where Nott was crumpled at the foot of the wall. When her gaze met Luna's once more, the blonde noticed that her opponent's eyes were dilated. "Bugger. Times like this make me wish I wasn't a lesbian." Luna arched a brow at that, making Tracey blush a bit as she rushed to explain herself. "You're terrifying. You just took down six of my housemates without even trying. But at the same time, you're beautiful. I mean, I've always thought you were pretty, but like this? That outfit, your new confidence, the ferocity— hnng. My body's having a hard time deciding whether to be scared of you or turned on by you right now."

"It depends, I suppose. Why were you with them?"

"I just agreed to come 'hunting' with them because they promised they'd stop harassing me about being a half-blood if I did it at least once. I'm not like them. I promise."

Tilting her head to one side, Luna studied the redhead's face for a few seconds before nodding. "I believe you. Which means that you have no reason to fear me. Soâ€¦ be turned on instead? That carries much more enticing possibilities for where we could go from here." Flicking a Feather-Light Charm down into Malfoy's body, Luna used a negligent kick to send him skidding across the floor until he hit the wall beside Nott, clearing the space between herself and Tracey so that she could approach the taller girl. Her newfound confidence faltering a bit in the face of something that hadn't been covered by her training, the blonde found herself leaning on her own memories of watching Zatanna try to seduce Wanda. Granted those attempts had failed, but Luna was willing to attribute that to Wanda not being of a compatible sexual orientation rather than a lack of skill on Zatanna's part. And so she brought her right hand up so that she could brush the backs of her leather-encased fingers over Tracey's cheek. "What do you think?"

Tracey closed her eyes as she leaned into the touch, and then blurted out the absolute last thing that Luna was expecting to hear. "Marry me."

Mouth opening and closing slowly, Luna joined Tracey in blushing bright red as she slowly lowered her hand. "Iâ€¦ umâ€¦ perhaps we could start with a date? I mean, apart from your name and your house and that you're so good at transfiguration that you make Hermione Granger want to pull her hair out, I don't really know anything about you and-"

"Oh my God, I can't believe I said that. I'm sorry. This is why I can't get a date. I mean, other than the wizarding world being really backward. But every time I'm around someone who I have a crush on, I open my mouth and really stupid things come out." Tracey let out a grunt of frustration before gesturing down at Luna's hips. "And seriously, whoever taught you to combine high heels with an outfit that exposes so much of your bum deserves an award or a medal or something because I can't stop staring at it, and since you're probably already creeped out by me and will pretend this conversation never happened? I would worship your arse for hours if I could."

It took Luna a moment to untangle the rush of words at the end of Tracey's speech, and then she found herself blushing - if possible - an even darker shade of red. Which wasn't to say that she wasn't intrigued. She'd just never had someone be that forward with her. Or at all forward with her. People tended to avoid her, at least when they weren't belittling or bullying her. And yetâ€¦ "Well, I could be amenable to that. I'm not sure. I've never had anyone offer to 'worship my arse', so I have no idea what that would entail. I was hoping to spend a bit more time with you, though. Get to know you. Perhaps we could go find somewhere a bit more privateâ€¦ and I could lay across your lap while we talked so you could demonstrate this arse worshipping thing for me?"

Tracey blinked a few times before grinning stupidly at Luna. "Deal. Just out of curiosity, do you know how to give a hickey? I've always

wanted one no matter how 'undignified' Pansy claims they are. Pretty sure she only hates them because Draco stunned her in the middle of the common room for trying to give him one. Anyway, I've always wanted to get one but since I've never had a girlfriendâ€¦"

Taking Tracey's hand in hers, Luna interlaced their fingers as she guided the Slytherin away from the mess she'd created. "I'm afraid I do not. But I'm sure that between the two of us, we can figure it out. Or if all else fails, I can sneak into the Gryffindor common room and ask Lavender Brown for some tips before reporting back to you for a practical examination."

"â€¦just as long as Lavender doesn't try to demonstrate anything on you."

10. Click Click Boom (Marvel)

Title: _Click Click Boom

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumperâ€¦ err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. With a myriad of writers, artists, and editors, actual rights are a nightmare when you go near a comic book universe. Suffice it to say that Marvel Entertainment LLC owns all of the property printed in their comics, along with the television and movie adaptations of said same property. Not mine, don't sue, and so forth and so on.

>Summary: From their midst, she vanished. From the outside, she watches. From the shadows, she strikes.

>Joe's Note: This is partially scavenged from the recently posted _Magical Thunder_, which I wrote a while ago and thought was never finished but actually found a finished copy of while cleaning up my stories folder. Since I couldn't remember how I wanted to end it, I decided to borrow part of it to make this story and since the two end up being rather divergent, I decided to keep working on it even after I located the finished _Magical Thunder_ and posted it.

>Dedications & Thanks: To Nicholas, Alexander, Howard, MJ, Daniel, Christopher, Timothy, Leigh, Noh, Jason, Chris, George, Koby, Judedeath, Ken, Thyatira, William, Wil, Thomas, Jack, Pat, Chris, Mitch, and Jess for sponsoring me on Patreon, and making it easier for me to spend more of my time writing.

* * *

><p>"Severusâ€¦ pleaseâ€¦"<p>

Snape raised his wand and pointed it directly at Dumbledore, hesitating for just a moment before his features twisted in a sneer of anger. "_Avada kedavra_!"

A jet of green light shot from the end of Snape's wand and hit Dumbledore squarely in the chest. Harry's scream of horror never left him; kept silent and unmoving by the last spell Dumbledore had cast before being disarmed, he was forced to watch as the headmaster was blasted into the air. For a split second he seemed to hang suspended

beneath the shining skull of the Dark Mark and then he slowly fell backward, like a great rag doll, over the battlements and out of sight. Harry felt as though he too were hurtling through space, out of control. What he'd just seen was an illusionâ€¦ it had not happenedâ€¦ it could not have happenedâ€¦

"Out of here, quickly." Snape seized Malfoy by the scruff of his neck and forced him through the door ahead of the rest. Behind them, Greyback and the squat siblings followed, the latter both panting excitedly. As they vanished through the door, Harry realized he could move again. What was now holding him paralyzed against the wall was not Dumbledore's magic, but horror and shock.

After a moment, those two emotions gave way to rage and Harry threw his invisibility cloak aside as the last Death Eater stepped through the doorway to exit the tower. "_Stupefy_!" The Death Eater was blasted off his feet by a bolt of red light, slamming him hard into the wall. He crumpled to the floor and didn't move. Harry didn't take the time to savor that little victory, clambering over him and running down the darkened staircase. For some reason, Harry had two utterly separate goals in mindâ€¦ he had to get to Dumbledore and he had to catch Snape. Somehow, the two things were linked in his mind. He could reverse what had happened if he had them both togetherâ€¦ the headmaster trusted Snapeâ€¦ Dumbledore could not have died, especially at Snape's handâ€¦

Harry leapt down the last ten steps of the spiral staircase and stopped where he landed, his wand raised as he took in the situation. The dimly lit corridor was full of dust; half the ceiling seemed to have fallen in; and a battle was raging before him, but even as he attempted to make out who were fighting whom, he heard the voice of his quarry. "It's over, time to go!" A black-clad form disappeared around the corner at the far end of the corridor; he and Malfoy seemed to have forced their way through the fight unscathed. As Harry plunged after them, one of the fighters detached themselves from the fray and flew at him. He barely had enough time to identify the human missile as Fenrir Greyback before the werewolf was on him. The far larger man knocked Harry back onto the stone floor, with filthy, matted hair in his face, the stench of sweat and blood filling his nose, hot, greedy breath at his throatâ€¦

"_Petrificus totalus_!" Harry felt Fenrir collapse against him and sighed in relief. He had enough problems as it was; he didn't need to add lycanthropy to the mess that was his life. With a stupendous effort, he pushed the werewolf off and onto the floor as a jet of green light came flying toward him. He rolled out of the way and then hopped to his feet, running headlong into the fight. His feet met something squashy and slippery on the floor and he stumbled; there were two bodies lying there, lying facedown in a pool of blood, but there was no time to investigate.

Harry could see red hair flying like flames in front of him: Ginny was locked in combat with the lumpy male Death Eater, Amycus, who was throwing hex after hex at her while Ginny dodged them. Amycus was giggling, enjoying the sport. "_Crucio_! _Crucio_! You can't dance forever, prettyâ€¦"

Narrowing his eyes, Harry raised his wand and jabbed it at Amycus. "_Impedimenta_!" His jinx hit the Death Eater in the chest, lifting the squealing man off his feet and slamming him into the opposite

wall. He slid down it and fell out of sight behind Ron, Professor McGonagall, and Lupin, each of whom was battling a separate Death Eater. Beyond them, Harry could see Tonks fighting an enormous blond wizard who was sending curses flying in all directions, so that they ricocheted off the walls around them, cracking stone, shattering the nearest windowâ€|

"Harry, where did you come from?" Ginny reached out, trying to grab at his arm, but Harry shook her off. There was no time to answer her now. They could talk later, when he'd caught Snape. He ducked his head and sprinted forward, narrowly avoiding a blast that shot over his head, showering them all with bits of stone as it hit the wall. Snape could not escape, he had to catch up with Snapeâ€|

An uncommonly vicious look on her face, McGonagall whirled and sent a bolt of sickly orange energy at the sole female Death Eater, Aleto. She gave the same piggish squeal that her brother had emitted when struck and sprinted away down the corridor with her arms over her head, Amycus rising to his feet and stumbling along behind her. Harry launched himself after them but his foot caught on something and the next moment, he was lying across someone's legs. Looking over, he saw Neville's pale, round face flat against the floor. "Neville! Are you-

Neville nodded, a grimace on his face as he clutched at his stomach. "M'alright. Harryâ€| Snape 'n Malfoyâ€| ran pastâ€|"

"I know, I'm on it!" From his spot on the floor, Harry shot a hex at the enormous blonde Death Eater who was causing most of the chaos. The man gave a howl of pain as the spell hit him in the face, wheeling around and following the others in retreating. Harry scrambled up from the floor and began to sprint along the corridor after him, ignoring the bangs issuing from behind him, the yells of the others to come back, and the mute call of the figures on the ground whose fate he didn't yet knowâ€|

Harry skidded as he turned a corner, his trainers slippery with blood. Snape had an immense head start. Was it possible that he had already entered the cabinet in the Room of Requirement and escaped, or had the Order taken steps to secure it, to prevent the Death Eaters retreating that way? He could hear nothing but his own pounding feet and his own hammering heart as he sprinted along the next empty corridor, but then spotted a bloody footprint that showed at least one of the fleeing Death Eaters was heading toward the front doors. Good. Hopefully the Order had blocked off the Room of Requirement and that would funnel all the Death Eaters to one spot if they wanted to escape.

As Harry skidded around another corner, a curse shot past his head. He dove behind a suit of armor for cover, the spell striking it and causing it to explode in a shower of metal shards. Harry spotted the brother and sister running down the marble staircase ahead of him and fired off several spells at them, but merely hit several of the multitude of portraits that lined the wall, sending the occupants scrambling into neighboring frames for cover. As he emerged from behind the wreckage of the armor, Harry heard more shouts and screams. Bigger; other people within the castle seemed to have awoken and were likely emerging from their dorms to see what the fuss was, giving the Death Eaters even more targets.

"Shit shit shit." Harry raced toward a shortcut, hoping to overtake the brother and sister and close in on Snape and Malfoy, who must surely have reached the grounds by now. Remembering to leap over the vanishing step halfway down the concealed staircase, he burst through a tapestry at the bottom and out into a corridor where a number of bewildered and pajama-clad Hufflepuffs stood.

Ernie Macmillan was the first to find words. "Harry! We heard a noise, and someone said something about the Dark Mark-"

Shaking his head, Harry pushed Ernie and Justin apart so he could shove through. "Out of the way!" He sprinted toward the nearby landing and down the remainder of the marble staircase, reaching the Entrance Hall. The oak front doors had been blasted open, there were smears of blood on the flagstones, and several terrified students stood huddled against the walls, one or two still cowering with their arms over their faces. The giant Gryffindor hourglass had been hit by a curse and the rubies within were slowly trickling out, falling onto the flagstones below and shattering. But before the Death Eaters could reach freedom, before Harry could give chase— people.

Out of nowhere.

Harry blinked as he skidded to a stop, trying to comprehend what he was seeing. One second, there had been an open path to freedom for the Death Eaters and the next, a slender figure was charging toward them. He wasn't the only person seeing them, though; the Death Eaters came to the same abrupt halt in the middle of Entrance Hall as they tried to figure out what to do next, caught between the seemingly suicidal new arrival and the converging defenders of Hogwarts. After a few seconds, the standoff ended when the Death Eater closest to the door raised his wand—

—only to be met with the sharp crack of a gun firing. As the Death Eater tipped over backward, revealing that he was suddenly missing a considerable portion of his face, the figure skidded to a stop in the midst of the remaining Death Eaters. Clad in a skintight, shiny Ravenclaw blue and bronze outfit, a familiar blonde smirked as she surveyed her opponents. "In the name of the Crown and the Ministry, I order you to drop your wands and surrender yourselves into STRIKE custody pending a transfer to a suitable WAND facility for detention and questioning regarding suspected terrorist activities against the citizens of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland."

"Like hell I will, you little bi-"

Having evidently not learned anything from his companion's death, a Death Eater drew his wand and managed to take a single step toward Luna Lovegood. Glowing symbols flickered across the surface of the strange golden glasses that Luna was wearing and then— crack! As his body crumpled to the floor, relieved of what was apparently a critical amount of brain matter, the others began to mutter and shuffle from side to side. Apparently, they weren't used to engaging a foe who - unlike the DMLE and the Order of the Phoenix - was quite willing to retaliate with lethal force. Stalking forward, Luna brought her foot down on the chest of the second Death Eater's corpse and looked around the Entrance Hall challengingly. "Would anyone else like to disagree with my plans for your evening, or shall we be behaving like mature and civilized beings from this point

forward?"

The remaining Death Eaters looked at each other before raising their hands in surrender, dropping to their knees in almost perfect synchronicity. It was too easy, Harry thought. Too perfect. What were theyâ€¦ there! Behind the others, Fenrir's legs flexed and then he was flying through the air toward the slender figure. Harry wanted to shout a warningâ€¦ cast a spellâ€¦ but there was no time. Luna was about to get herself mauled by the worst werewolf in Britain and-

And evidently wherever Luna had disappeared to for most of the past year, she'd beenâ€¦ actually, Harry couldn't think of anything that could possibly explain what happened next. Quickly tucking her pistol into a thigh holster, the blonde brought her hands up to grab Fenrir's and somehow absorbed all his momentum, forcing him to drop back to his feet in front of her. That was followed by two quick knees to the werewolf's stomach, a series of lightning quick punches, and then Luna bending forward to deliver a devastating scorpion kick straight to Fenrir's face. As the massive brunette went stumbling backward, blood gushing from his nose, Luna finally drew her wand and cast three stunners at Fenrir in rapid succession. The werewolf collapsed to the floor, unconscious, leaving Luna to look around warily as she straightened up. "I'll assume that means the rest of you won't be coming quietly either. Widowâ€¦ we have our prisoner for interrogation. Would you care to dance?"

"I thought you'd never ask." The distinctly American voice came from behind Harry, making him jump as a young woman with flaming red hair didn't so much melt out of the shadows as erupt past him, electricity crackling around her hands as she charged. If the similarly styled black and red outfit wasn't proof enough that she was connected to this strange new Luna, the way they fought together did. It really was like they were dancing, gracefully twisting past or leaping over each other as they took on one Death Eater after another. Harry found himself intrigued by the fact that while both carried guns, neither drew them as they worked together. Which wasn't to say that they were avoiding lethal force: every person that Luna cursed went down screaming in pain before going eerily silent, while 'Widow' took out her opponents with either blasts of lightning or snapping their necks. When their dance finally ended, they were the only ones left standingâ€¦ and Fenrir was the only Death Eater that Harry was sure was still alive. "That was satisfying. I hate child killers."

Luna nodded, making her way over to Fenrir's fallen form and rolling him onto his stomach. Yanking his arms behind his back, she pulled out a pair of silver manacles with glowing blue accents and secured his wrists together. "We should have taken more prisoners, but there will be more Death Eaters. And we got the one that we came for. Captain, I believe you can take it from here?"

For the third time in only a few minutes, Harry found himself glad that Moody wasn't there: he wasn't even practicing occasional vigilance tonight. "Gladly." A dark-haired woman wearing a red domino mask and a catsuit patterned after the Union Jack strode confidently into the Entrance Hall, backed by a dozen or so men in black muggle military gear who were carrying almost excessively large rifles. "My name is Captain Britain. You may call me Captain Britain. Per our agreement with the Ministry of Magic, my companions and I are here to drag you to a warded STRIKE prison nearby. There, a team of telepaths

will give you a full psionic evaluation. Once you have been drained of actionable intelligence, you will be transferred to WAND custody and shipped off toâ€| wherever the Yanks feel like putting you. If you attempt to resist, we will use force. If you attempt to injure me or mineâ€|" Coming to a stop in front of Fenrir, Captain Britain curled her fingers into a fist, a nimbus of purple light gathering around it before extending downward into what was unmistakably a blade. "Just because I do not carry a wand does not mean that I am unarmed. Any questions? No? Good."

"Betsy?" Rising to her feet, Luna wandered over to lean on the new arrival before gesturing down at Fenrir. "He doesn't have any questions because he's unconscious."

Eyes widening behind her mask, Captain Britain let out a sigh before slumping. "â€|I thought he was just being really, really compliant. Bigger. That was a perfectly good waste of a hundred and eight words."

As the muggle troops surged past the pair and began preparing their captive for transport, Harry threaded his way through the mayhem and made his way over to Luna. The blonde offered him a small smile but remained silent, leaving Harry struggling to figure out how to get a conversation started. Finally, he couldn't contain his curiosity anymore. "Soâ€| being able to go hand-to-hand with a werewolf. That's new."

Luna let out a tinkling, bell-like giggle at that. "Not really, Harry. I've been this strong for a few months now. I wanted to come back sooner, but Mister Stark and Miss van Dyne had to make sure my implants would survive areas of heavy magical saturation." Despite his sheltered upbringing, even Harry knew about a certain muggle plastic surgery procedure and his eyes immediately dropped to Luna's chest. Which - in his defense - did seem significantly larger than it had been when last they'd seen each other. Captain Britain groaned and buried her face in her hands even as Luna burst into renewed giggles at his behavior. "Don't be silly, Harry, those are all natural. Puberty affects witches too, you know. No, SHIELD gave me a series of cybernetic implants as part of my basic training that make me stronger and faster than I used to be. Not quite as strong or fast as Natasha, but I'm still growing into them. Strong and fast enough to handle anything I'll run into when I take full command of WAND, thoughâ€|"

"Cybernetics? SHIELD? Your mentor? WAND?" Harry felt a headache coming on; trying to get an answer to just one question had ended with him having three entirely new questions for her. In the end, he managed to boil them down to just one: "What's going on?"

"It's a long story that involves accidentally wandering into Norway during our trip to Sweden this summer, the God of Thunder, three kegs of beer, and a game of Exploding Snap. And then eleven months at a top secret military base in America, training under two of their top espionage agents so I could come back here and help you clean up the wizarding world, since the Ministry obviously doesn't know how to. I'll tell you later if you're really curious; it's actually quite funny. Anywaysâ€| let me introduce you to the lovely people who've been caring for me for the past year." Grabbing Harry by the wrist, Luna led him over to where the redhead she'd fought with was leaning against a wall, fiddling with a rifle that was probably as tall as

Harry himself was. Beside her stood a rather dour-looking man in all black holding a compound bow? What the bloody hell? "The woman with excellent fashion sense, an uncanny resemblance to your mother, and a piece of hardware from the military's Compensating Collection is Black Widow. And being cranky because he missed his son's birthday and didn't even get to blow anything up is Hawkeye."

"hi?"

11. Before my core is dry (Kill La Kill)

Title: _Before my core is dry

>Author: JoeHundredaire

>Rating: PG-13/FR15

>Disclaimer: Captain Fangirlhumper a err, J.K. Rowling owns the world the _Harry Potter_ series takes place in. Wish the characters were mine so I could do utterly retarded things to them and watch my bank account get steadily larger, but sadly not mine. _Kill La Kill_, RyÅ«ko Matoi, Satsuki KiryÅ«in, and all related characters and concepts are the property of Studio Trigger. Not mine, don't sue, and so forth and so on.

>Summary: "It still had windows, if that's what you mean. Other than that a RyÅ«ko's right. It is kind of a dump, at least compared to HonnÅ«ji Academy and even HonnÅ« City. But even if this place is an antiquated dump, it's my dump and so I'm going to save it."

>Joe's Note: While this will be the final installment - at least as far as I currently have planned - in my series of misadventures for Luna, this is actually one of the first ideas that I came up with. It just took me a while to sort out the 'how' and 'why' to a degree that I was happy with a story outline, and then obviously time to flesh it out into an actual story. Given that we know someone who makes a light up RagyÅ« wig, someone who makes kamui, and someone who cosplays Luna a I feel like this could become a thing at a convention at some point? If it does, I'll definitely take and post a bunch of pictures.

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* * *

><p>"Stop."<p>

Based on the way that Rubeus Hagrid lurched to a stop, Harry Potter was reasonably sure that the half-giant's compliance was magically-induced. And then a chill settled over them where they stood, forcing Harry to breathe even more carefully than he had been before as the dementors patrolling the outer trees sent the air temperature plummeting. They no longer affected him - the fact that he'd survived death burned inside him, serving as an even more effective protection than the patronus of his father's stag form - but that didn't mean they couldn't expose his deception.

Someone passed by Harry so close that a robe brushed against his face, and he realized that it was Voldemort himself a moment later

when the man spoke, his voice magically magnified so that it rolled across the castle grounds, crashing upon Harry's eardrums. "Harry Potter is dead. He was killed as he ran away, trying to save himself while you lay down your lives for him. We bring you his body as proof that your hero is gone. The battle is won. You have lost half of your fighters. My Death Eaters outnumber you and the Boy-Who-Lived is finished. There must be no more war. Anyone who continues to resist - man, woman or child - will be slaughtered, as will every member of their family. Come out of the castle, now. Kneel before me and you shall be spared. Your parents and children, your brothers and sisters will live and be forgiven, and you will join me in the new world we shall build together." Silence reigned, and Voldemort was so close to him that Harry didn't dare open his eyes again. "Very well. Come." Voldemort continued on ahead, forcing Hagrid to follow behind him. With a bit more distance between him and his foe, Harry risked opening his eyes a fraction. Voldemort was striding on ahead of him, wearing the great snake Nagini around his shoulders. But there was no way that he could draw his wand without being noticed by the Death Eaters who marched on either side of Hagrid across the slowly lightening lawn.

"Harry." His breath hitching, Hagrid sobbed deeply, sending great tears of grief falling to splatter against Harry's skin. "Oh, Harry! Harry!"

Unable to do anything and not wanting to risk discovery, Harry shut his eyes tight again. He knew that they were approaching the castle and strained his ears to distinguish - above the gleeful voices of the Death Eaters and their tramping footsteps - signs of life from those within. "Stop." The Death Eaters ceased their forward advance at Voldemort's command, and then Harry heard them spreading out in a line facing the open front doors of the school. Even through his closed lids, he could see the bright glow of light streaming out of the Entrance Hall and falling upon them. He waited. Any moment, the people for whom he'd tried to die would see him in Hagrid's arms, supposedly dead.

"No!"

The scream was all the more terrible because he had never expected or dreamed that Professor McGonagall could make such a sound; Harry heard another woman laughing nearby and knew that Bellatrix Lestrange gloried in McGonagall's despair. He squinted again for a single second and saw the open doorway filling with people, as the survivors of the battle came out on to the front steps to face their vanquishers and see the truth of Harry's death for themselves. Voldemort remained directly in front of him, reaching up to stroke Nagini's head with a long white finger. Still unable to act, Harry let his eyes drift closed once more as the shouts of his friends washed over him.

"No!"

"No!"

"Harry! Harry!"

Ron, Hermione, and Ginny's heartbroken voices were even worse to hear than McGonagall's; Harry wanted nothing more than to shout back to them, let them know that he was okay and that not all was lost. Yet

he forced himself to lay there silently in Hagrid's arms, waiting for the perfect moment. His friends' cries acted like a trigger, the crowd of survivors from the first battle finding their voices, screaming and yelling abuse at the Death Eaters untilâ€¦ "Silence!" Voldemort's shout was accompanied by a bang and a flash of light so bright that it penetrated Harry's closed eyes, and then the world around them went silent. A mass Silencing Charm. His opponent was powerfulâ€¦ increasingly close to being defeatable, but powerful to be sure. "It is over! Set him down, Hagrid, at my feet, where he belongs!" With a muffled cry, Hagrid obeyed and Harry felt himself lowered onto the grass of the castle grounds. "You see?" Like the great dramatic ponce that he was, Voldemort began pacing back and forth beside Harry's prone body. "Harry Potter is dead! Do you understand now, deluded ones? He was nothing, ever, but a boy who relied on others to sacrifice themselves for him!"

There was a long few seconds of silence, and then a familiar voice called out. "He beat you!" Harry fought to keep his face impassive at the sound of Ron Weasley's voice, and at the shouts and screams that followed from the defenders of Hogwarts until a second, more powerful bang extinguished their voices once more.

"He was killed while trying to sneak out of the castle grounds, killed while trying to save himselfâ€¦" Voldemort sounded gleeful as the lie slipped from his lips, only to shift to incredulous as he uttered the last few syllables before trailing off. Harry heard a scuffle and a shout, then came a third bang and a flash of light followed by a grunt of pain. Harry opened his eyes an infinitesimal amount, just enough to see that someone had broken free of the crowd and charged at Voldemort. They stood in front of the man defiantly even as someone on Voldemort's side of the battle lines crumpled to the ground. Had they deflected his curse, then? What was going on? God, Harry wished he could give up his ruseâ€¦ "And who is this? Who has volunteered to demonstrate what happens to those who continue to fight when the battle is lost and the war is over? Who dares to defy me?"

Bellatrix gave a delighted laugh that sent shivers down Harry's spine. "It's Luna Lovegood, my Lord! We sought to capture her so that we could gain leverage over her father, but nobody could find her. The little coward has returned, it appears, from wherever she ran off to."

That announcement more than anything tested Harry's control. Luna was back? She'd been missing since some point early the past summer; she'd RSVP'd to Bill and Fleur's wedding but failed to show. While the Order of the Phoenix and Dumbledore's Army alike had been occupied with more important tasks, both had put out feelers on Harry's behalf. All had come up empty. It was as if the little blonde Ravenclaw had fallen off the face of the earthâ€¦ and yet now here she was, back in the thick of things. How? Why? And most importantlyâ€¦ what made her think facing off with Voldemort was a good idea? Where was Neville? What had happened to their plan?

"I used to fear you, you know. When I was a child. Then I visited Tokyo. Met RagyÅ• KiryÅ«in. Was tortured and infused with Life Fibers as a part of her mad plans. Communed with the Primordial Life Fiber. Now I know what true evil is. Now I know what to fear. You?" Stepping forward, Luna shook her head as she slowly closed the distance between herself and Voldemort. "You are an irritant. You are a pest."

So I've come back to exterminate you and yours, like you should any troublesome infestation. And I've brought my new sisters with me to help."

Unlike when Luna had shoved her way forward, the crowd formed by Hogwarts's defenders parted willingly this time, allowing two more girls to advance unimpeded and join Luna. With all attention thoroughly diverted from him by their defiant display, Harry took a moment to slip under his Invisibility Cloak before hopping to his feet so he could get a better view. The newcomers were definitely sisters. Luna's sisters, on the other hand? Not likely. If nothing else, the fact that they were quite obviously Asian debunked that claim. The girl standing to Luna's left was the younger and shorter of the two, with a bright red streak in her short black hair. Clad in an odd navy and red outfit while wielding what appeared to be two halves of an oversized pair of red scissors, she was definitely not someone that Harry would have wanted to cross. Neither was the longer-haired older sister, who surveyed the battlefield-to-be imperiously from her position at Luna's right side, a black-bladed short sword in one hand and a dagger in the other as her white dress rustled softly in the wind. "This is where you used to go to school? God. What a dump."

"We're here to help them, RyÅ«ko, not insult them."

"It's not an insult if it's true, Satsuki. This place is a mess."

"I'm sure it was nicer before the war broke out."

"It still had windows, if that's what you mean. Other than thatâ€¦ RyÅ«ko's right. It is kind of a dump, at least compared to HonnÅ•ji Academy and even HonnÅ• City. But even if this place is an antiquated dump, it's my dump and so I'm going to save it." Luna drew herself up, the lapels of her black vest coming alive as a pair of yellow and orange eyes glared out at the world angrily. Then her hair erupted with rainbow light, casting a multicolored glow on the pale skin of her face as she grinned widely. "And I'm going to use every power at my disposal to do that. Let's go, Maketsu!"

In perfect synch, Luna reached up to stab two fingers against the odd bracer that ran along the top of her left arm even as RyÅ«ko bit at the bracelet on her left wrist so she could pull a piece free and Satsuki slid the fingers of her right hand up her left arm, nimbly closing three blue clasps. The trio erupted with lightâ€¦

"Life Fiber Synchronize, Kamui Senketsu!"

"Life Fiber Override, Kamui Junketsu!"

"Life Fiber Harmonize, Kamui Maketsu!"

â€¦and then dimmed to reveal three girls in outfits that made Harry blush. They were terrifying, to be sure, but also very revealing. Without any regard for her near-nudity, though, Luna lashed out with a kick that sent Voldemort flying back into the crowd of Death Eaters even as Satsuki went airborne with a shout of 'Junketsu SenpÅ«!' and RyÅ«ko neatly decapitated Bellatrix with one slash of the slightly larger scissorâ€¦ bladeâ€¦ contraption in her right hand. Wow. Luna really wasn't kidding about taking back Hogwarts by force, was she?

Silver eyes met his unerringly and then Luna made a beckoning gesture, repeating it until Harry shrugged off the hood of his cloak and approached her. "Satsuki has the dementors. RyÅ«ko will take care of the giants and then join Satsuki to take care of the acromantula. Leave the Death Eaters to your friends. We'll take Voldemort."

Harry opened his mouth to protest - they had a plan, it was a good plan, they just needed to execute his plan and Voldemort would be defeated forever - and then one of the giants let out a roar. Jumping, Harry spun around just in time to watch Satsuki flit past the giant's head in a streak of blue light and then the giant tipped sideways, his massive head parting from his neck and hitting the ground a few seconds before the rest of his corpse. "Looks like Satsuki has at least one of the giants but yeah. Sounds good to me. Good plan. Let's do this."

"I thought you'd like it. Maketsu Tanken!" Thrusting her fists forward, Luna generated a set of vicious-looking white claws from between the knuckles of her black-clad fists before stalking off in pursuit of Voldemort. From out of nowhere came Nagini, the great serpent lunging at the girl who had assaulted her master with fangs bared. Luna was utterly nonplussed, absentmindedly swinging her right arm in an arc and carving the snake into three pieces with her new claws. "You have to kill him, right? That's the prophecy?"

Shooting a glance back over his shoulder as the pieces of Nagini splattered against the ground, Harry nodded absently. "More or less, yeah."

"Does it specify that you can't have help killing him?"

"No."

"Oh goody. I was hoping you'd say that." Luna's grin turned vicious and Harry followed her gaze, spotting Voldemort limping toward them with his wand in one hand and the other clutching his chest. "Evidently he had my father killed. I say evidently because I haven't had time to properly investigate. That's what I've heard, though. So I was planning on killing him and making it hurt. If I can't kill him? I can still make him hurt and then let you kill him. If you don't mind, that is?"

Without waiting for him to respond, Luna threw herself forward and stabbed Voldemort in the stomach with all four of her claws. The scream that emerged from the man was different from the one that Harry had heard when Nagini had died: full of pain and indignation instead of rage and hatred. Pulling back, she retracted the claws on her right hand long enough to punch him twice in the face, and then extended them again just in time to catch a whip made of fire to the side. What should have been a damaging if not fatal stab to the chest went wide to the left as her entire body was rocked by the blow, and Voldemort fired a Banishing Charm into Luna at point black range for good measure. Harry gulped as Voldemort's scarlet eyes landed on him, widening for a moment before narrowing in hatred. "I guess this is still technically part of the plan"

Unlike the practice duels he'd been a part of while training with Dumbledore's Army, there were no courtesies observed or spells shouted. One moment, they were staring each other down. The next, Voldemort was lashing out with a sickly yellow spell that was

deflected off to the side as RyÅ«ko dove past him, using one of her blades to bat the spell away like they were playing ball. It hit a Death Eater in the back and he went down screaming in pain. Not the Cruciatus but definitely nothing Harry was in a hurry to experience himself. Taking up a defensive stance in front of him, the girl shot a glare back over her shoulder. "Can you please try a little harder to stay alive? I don't want to have dragged my ass out here for nothing."

Harry growled as the girl batted away two more curses, slipping into place beside her and hurling a hex of his own at Voldemort. "I could have handled that. All three of those. I'm perfectly capable of casting shields when I need one; I don't need you to protect me."

"Fine then. Have fun trying not to die." Twirling in front of Harry as she deflected another curse, RyÅ«ko thrust her blades out to either side and triggeredâ€| somethingâ€| that caused them to unfurl, doubling in length and impaling a pair of Death Eaters who had been rushing to their master's aid. "I'm gonna go stab those giants to death, and then slice up some spiders."

"You do that. Because I can handle this without your help." Harry shuddered as RyÅ«ko flicked her blades downward and then back up, bisecting the impaled Death Eaters and freeing her weapons. Then she mimicked her sister's earlier feat, shooting up into the air with a shout of 'Senketsu Shippu' as her outfit shapeshifted to have jetâ€| legâ€| things. Rather than resume their battle, both Harry and Voldemort opted to track her progress as she raced toward a giant who seemed perilously close to overpowering poor Grawp. Perilously close became not at all capable as RyÅ«ko reached her target, spinning her newly lengthened blades through the air and separating both of the giant's arms from his torso. Coasting to a stop, she shouted something at Grawp that caused the runty giant to guffaw loudly before going to work on the disarmed giant's face with both massive fists, RyÅ«ko jetting off in search of new prey. Turning back to Voldemort, Harry nodded in the girl's direction. "Getting rid of her was probably a bad idea, huh?"

Chuckling lowly, Voldemort raised his wand as he prepared to hurl a new barrage of spells Harry's wayâ€| only to get knocked on his ass as a jet-propelled Luna slammed into him.

Okay, maybe he was fine without RyÅ«ko.

Also, he was surrounded by some scary girls these days.

A black-hilted dagger went flying past his head close enough to ruffle his hair, Luna catching it without even looking and diving forward to plunge it into Voldemort's right shoulder. In the middle of attempting to rise to his feet, Voldemort let out a scream as he collapsed back to the ground; before he even hit the grass, Luna had absently flipped the dagger up into the air so that Satsuki could snatch it as she flew past on her way to the next cluster of dementors.

Make that very scary girls.

End

file.